

All Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group (APPCOG)

Advisory Board: Minutes

11 May 2021, at 12:30 – 13:30

Via [Zoom](#), Meeting ID: 277 391 9410

Chaired by Liz Twist MP

Attendees

Liz Twist MP (Chair) (LT)
Jason McCartney MP (JM)
Aaron Horsely, Office of Barry Sheerman MP (AH)
Chris Bielby, GISG (CB)
Isabella Myers, COMed (IMy)
Scott Darroch, Gas Safe Register (SD)
Andy Curtis, CoGDEM (AC)
Dan Edwards, SGN (DE)
Ian McCluskey, IGEM (IMc)
David Goodall, Steve Vick International (DG)
Stine Holm, Office of Liz Twist MP (SH)
Steve Dacre, NGN (SD)
Carys Hudd, WWU (CH)
Ian Palmer-Smith, Domestic and General (IP-S)
Karen Page, Domestic and General (KP)
Daniela Gentile, NPIS (DG)
Jonathan Shaw, Policy Connect (JS)
Oona Muirhead, Policy Connect (OM)
Robert McLaren, Policy Connect (RM)
Mohamed Ali, Policy Connect (MA)
Laura Fatah, Policy Connect (LF)

Apologies

Baroness Finlay
Sir Peter Bottomley MP
Rt. Hon. Maria Miller MP
Luke Pollard MP
Ian Byrne MP
Kerry Potter, SGN
Sally Thomas, WWU
Elizabeth Warwick, WWU

1. Welcome by the Chair, introductions and apologies

LT welcomed members to the meeting and received apologies as above.

2. APPCOG Working Group updates

a. COMed Group

The last meeting of the COMed was on the 18th of February, the group will meet again on 24 May.

At the last meeting, the group gratefully received a presentation on work funded by the Gas Safety Trust (GST) examining oxygen as a therapeutic treatment for CO poisoning. The UCL researchers are examining when oxygen delivery can have detrimental impacts on neuronal cells, and how this can be mitigated by the addition of other substances. This work is as yet unpublished, but a formal update will be shared with the wider group when possible. The COMed group were also informed by Adrian McConnell that a second stage of this project will be funded by GST.

IMy ran an online workshop on the link between CO and cardiovascular disease. The insights from the workshop will be shared. The work on pregnancy is continuing well, and will aim to report back at the next Advisory Board meeting. There are a number of avenues in research being explored by the group. COMed is also looking to expand into other the areas of interest with new members.

b. Stakeholder Forum

CB updated on the last Stakeholder Forum, which was held on 4th March 2021 with over 41 attendees. Members received a presentation from Dr Nichola Ashby, Head of Learning and Practice Development at Royal College of Nursing (RCN). Dr Ashby highlighted the RCN's new carbon monoxide E-learning initiative, which has been developed with the Gas Safe Charity's Think CO program and has been made available to all 450,000 of the RCNs members. This new online learning tool for health care professionals offers short modules for learners with limited time, to raise awareness of carbon monoxide risks and symptoms.

Member updates from the Stakeholder Forum include:

- On 8 June Gas Safety Trust will open the grants call for small (up to 10k) short or novel pilot projects, closing 14 July
- The Katie Haines Memorial Trust have secured places for runners in both the Virtual London Marathon and the Vitality Virtual London 10km to raise funds for their work, details of how to donate/sponsor will be circulated.
- Gas Safety Week (GSW) will be held 13 – 19 of September 2021
- Initial evidence shared from Chimney Skills Training indicates that approximately a third of solid fuel users do not have CO alarms installed in their homes
- IGEM are holding a gas safety conference on the 9th of June in collaboration with Gas Industry Safety Group which will include a specific section on carbon monoxide, featuring insights from medical studies
- CB will be stepping down as the Chair of Trustees for Gas Safety Trust and Baroness Finlay will become the new Chair of Trustees

c. Comms Group

SD updated as RL unavailable. The Comms group met on 22 February and have decided to move forward with a Summer Safety Campaign. Learning has been taken forward from CO Awareness Week, and relevant stakeholders have fed into a campaign working group meeting. A proposed approach will be presented at the next Comms meeting on 20 May. The key messages of the summer campaign will be:

- I. Alarms – take one with you if you are a holiday maker, install one correctly if you are a vendor
- II. BBQs – the unknown danger, carbon monoxide is dripping from these – be aware, do not take inside, ventilate outside
- III. LPG – can be a high risk fuel type due to insecure fittings and fixtures and incorrect usage – take extra care

Dependent on available budget, there are a few options to consider for promotion of the campaign. RL will draft a 'shopping list' of items to provide an overview of what can be achieved/considered, and present this at the meeting on 20 May. Policy Connect is feeding into the PR and parliamentary side of the campaign and will present to the group with RL at the meeting on 20 May.

In 2021, we will seek a greater demarcation between CO Awareness Week and Gas Safety Week, for clarity of messaging.

JS asked JM & LT how the APPCOG can make it easy for parliamentarians to engage with comms campaigns, e.g. Carbon Monoxide Safe4Summer and Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week?

JM (who previously worked for ITV) noted that parliamentarians are often flooded with many requests to engage in campaigns; he suggested making the campaign messages really relevant to constituents and said outreach is most effective when there is a constituency link; e.g. fatalities or near misses. There may also be opportunities for engaging with parliamentarians where there are higher levels of vulnerable constituents, or venues hosting summer activities, such as camp sites and holiday parks. LT added that making it easy for parliamentarians get involved is key, sending links to share and providing pre-written quotes for sign off are all helpful ways to secure support.

d. CO+SciTech

DG updated that the SciTech had sent out a questionnaire to new and existing members to determine how the group should operate going forward. A couple of responses have been received, DG will update the group on the findings from the questionnaires in the next meeting.

3. Secretariat Update

The group welcomed Mohamed Ali, the new Project Coordinator for Health and Accessibility at Policy Connect to the meeting. LF highlighted key points for the board to note from the Secretariat Update:

Parliamentary APPCOG members now 15

Following April's Annual General Meeting, APPCOG welcomes four new MPs to our group. Ian Byrne MP, Jason McCartney MP, and Mr Clive Betts MP. Stephanie Peacock MP has also made a request to join after the AGM, and will be formally elected at the next advisory board meeting. We are delighted to welcome Stephanie, and congratulate her for leading an informative debate on carbon monoxide [in parliament on 21 April](#).

Ofgem: Social Return on Investment (SROI) clarification

Ofgem has provided further clarity regarding the carbon monoxide and vulnerability fund, in response to Policy Connect's targeted question on the Social Return on Investment requirement. Ofgem stated that they will only seek to 'claw back' funding if it has not been used, or if the proposed project has not been delivered. GDNs will not be held to the Social Return on Investment they predicted or estimated at registration. This is very welcome assurance; and will enable the GDNs to be creative in their use of the allowance, free from concern that they may be penalised at a later date.

OPSS (Office for Product Safety and Standards) engagement

LF is speaking with the OPSS (Office for Product Safety and Standards) regarding the idea of a centralised national database for gas appliances. There are some specific lines of enquiry that relevant APPCOG stakeholders have helpfully fed into, which will form a collective response to the OPSS. Members will be kept updated as this progresses.

MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government) consultation on alarms regulation

It remains unclear when the outcome of the recent consultation on CO alarms in rented properties can be expected. LT suggests some parliamentary questions on this might be timely.

LF has written to the civil servant that APPCOG previously worked with on this and will write again, we are also seeking engagement with the Chief Scientific Adviser for MHCLG. To prepare for the outcome of the consultation, LF is working with new media officer Bridget Nea to produce two press releases (one if gas cookers remain excluded, and one if the government reviews the exclusion of gas cookers).

Action: LF to draft a follow up letter for LT, BS and JM to sign to send to the Minister in relation to the omission of gas cookers from the consultation and asking that they be included.

4. Discussion of APPCOG Focus Areas in 2021

An overview of the key areas of focus for the APPCOG was presented to the Board.

- **Prevalence of harm from carbon monoxide**

As attendees will know, it is likely that the officially recorded levels of harm from CO are likely to be only the tip of the iceberg, and represent a significant under estimate of the true picture. This is due in part to difficulties with diagnosis and low public and medical awareness. In order to better inform the cost benefit analysis used by MHCLG, it will be beneficial to provide evidence of the wider, “unseen” harm from CO, including research on pregnancy and from wider areas looking at the potential prevalence of exposure. The public often perceive consequences of CO to be fatal, and are not aware that non-fatal chronic poisoning occurs. LF and IMy are developing a COMed event centering on this and will update in due course.

- **Better Data on CO**

The APPCOG and GST are working with key stakeholders to explore how data practices in carbon monoxide might be improved. On the 1st of April, The APPCOG hosted a CO data workshop chaired by Baroness Finlay to understand what data other stakeholders are currently collecting, and explore ways to bridge the data silos in CO. The workshop generated some strong points of alignment, and some innovative ideas for gaining data. GST and APPCOG are working together to progress this initiative and will feedback in due course.

- **CO Awareness and Safety Practice in Health & Social Care**

The APPCOG’s parliamentary inquiry chaired by LT held its first session following this Advisory Board meeting. The inquiry explored current levels of awareness in HSC, and the protections in place for domiciliary health and social care workers. The session identified the examples of best practice, and

determined how sector leaders and regulatory bodies might reasonably encourage employers and professionals to improve CO safety.

- **Integrating services & patient pathways**

This areas is linked to work on data and the HSCPs Inquiry. The APPCOG will seek to identify ways in which services can be integrated across the CO landscape, for example linking first responders to medical professionals. There may also be opportunities for linking with community or local authority initiatives to effectively spread safety messages and enable risk prevention. Further integration of services will serve to ensure that carbon monoxide safety is understood to be a public health risk, and is effectively monitored as such.

- **Increasing Awareness**

As always, the APPCOG will continue work to increase awareness of CO. This year, with the addition of the Carbon Monoxide Safe4Summer Campaign, as outlined in the Comms update. The APPCOG hopes that CO Awareness week 2021 can be even bigger than in 2020, with greater involvement from parliamentarians and more interactive online content.

All members and attendees agreed this seems a sensible forward plan.

5. Carbon Monoxide Themes

The below themes are suggested as a quasi-permanent framework for the APPCOG going forward, to better communicate the work the APPCOG is doing, and thus enable public and parlimentary interest and understanding. These themes will run as a 'golden thread' through our working groups and events, which will help to streamlining thinking, track progress, and integrate ideas.

- I. Prevention
- II. Detection
- III. Response and Treatment
- IV. Intelligence & Data

Prevention	Detection	Treatment & Response	Intelligence & Data
Awareness – public, community and medical			Prevalence
Servicing Appliances	Alarms	Response Protocols	
Healthy Homes	Low Level symptoms	Treatment outcomes	
Ventilation	Patient Pathways and integrated services		
Appliance register	Training & education	Improved NHS Facilities	
Innovation			

All members and attendees agreed this is a useful framework that APPCOG should implement.

Action: Laura to update website with Themes and explanation.

6. AOB

(None)

7. Close of meeting

LT thanked members for attending and closed the meeting.

Secretariat contact:

Laura Fatah

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