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COVID-19 Recovery Committee

COVID-19 Recovery Committee: Annual Report 2023-24



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COVID-19 Recovery Committee

To consider and report on matters relating to COVID-19 falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for COVID Recovery and other Scottish Ministers where relevant, including—

- (a) Cross government coordination of COVID-19 recovery policies and strategic review;
- (b) the operation of powers under the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act, the Coronavirus Act and any other legislation in relation to the response to COVID-19;
- (c) any secondary legislation arising from the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act; and
- (d) and any other legislation or policy in relation to the response to COVID-19.



covid19.committee@parliament.scot

Committee Membership



Convener
Jim Fairlie
Scottish National Party



Deputy Convener
Murdo Fraser
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party



John Mason
Scottish National Party



Stuart McMillan
Scottish National Party



Alex Rowley
Scottish Labour



Brian Whittle
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party

Introduction

1. This report covers the work of the COVID-19 Recovery Committee during the parliamentary year from 13 May 2023 to 12 May 2024.
2. The Parliament agreed Motion S6M-09720 on recommendation of the Parliamentary Bureau that the Committee be wound-up by 14 July 2023. The Committee's final meeting was held on 29 June 2023. This report has therefore been published after the Committee's final meeting and before the end of the reporting period.

Meetings

3. The Committee met four times during the reporting period, one meeting was held entirely in private, and three meetings included items in private. The reasons for taking business in private were to consider the Committee's work programme, to consider draft reports or letters, or to consider the evidence heard during committee meetings.

Legislation

4. The Committee was not referred any primary or secondary legislation during the reporting period.

Inquiries

Recovery of NHS dental services

5. The Committee undertook an inquiry into the recovery of NHS dental services. The purpose of the inquiry was to track progress on the aims set out in the NHS Recovery Plan 2021-2026. This includes a commitment to return NHS dentistry services to pre-pandemic levels.
6. Ahead of the inquiry, the Committee wrote to the then Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care on 27 April 2023. The Minister for Public Health and Women's Health responded on 25 May 2023.
7. The Committee also wrote to the 14 territorial NHS Boards in advance of taking oral evidence, requesting information in relation to NHS dental services. The Committee received a response from each health board and invited three to give evidence at its meeting on 15 June 2023.
8. The Committee also conducted a survey of NHS dentists, which ran from 5 May to 31 May 2023 and received 225 responses. A summary of the responses was produced and published on the Committee's website.
9. The Committee took evidence on the inquiry at its meetings on 15, 22 and 29 June 2023.
10. The Committee wrote to the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health on 5 July 2023. The Committee requested that the Minister send the reply to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.

Equalities and engagement

11. The Committee has mainstreamed equalities throughout its work, including a focus on the impact of COVID-19 on inequality and human rights. In its statement on priorities, the Committee agreed that one of its objectives was to incorporate human rights and sustainable development principles into its scrutiny approach. The Committee also agreed that its non-legislative scrutiny would focus on the NHS recovery in 2023.
12. The Committee's inquiry on the recovery of NHS dental services included an aim to investigate how access to services was being targeted in communities that experience health inequalities. This was the focus of the first panel of witnesses who gave evidence on 15 June 2023. The Committee heard from Margaret McKeith, Assistant Director, the ALLIANCE; Professor David Conway, Professor of Dental Public Health, University of Glasgow and Honorary Consultant in Dental Public Health, Public Health Scotland; and Dr Manal Eschelli, Project Coordinator, West of Scotland Regional Equality Council.

Post legislative scrutiny

13. The Committee did not undertake post legislative scrutiny during the reporting period.

