

T: 0300 244 4000
E: MinisterSCMWS@gov.scot

Clare Haughey MSP
Convener
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament

hscs.committee@parliament.scot

20th of September 2023

I am writing to provide a further update on the discussions which have been taking place in relation to the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill (NCS Bill), which I set out in my previous letter of 12 July.

Reports on summer regional co-design events published

As part of our commitment to build the National Care Service with people with lived experience, we have held regional events across Scotland this summer to hear from the diverse range of people who use and deliver community health and social care support.

The events focused on five initial co-design themes; keeping care support local, information sharing to improve care support, valuing the workforce, realising rights and responsibilities, and making sure my voice is heard.

The regional events took place from June to August and covered Stirling, Glasgow, Dundee, Stranraer, Oban, Skye, Shetland and Elgin. It has been a busy, packed summer and we have heard from more than 340 people across the in-person events. To allow for maximum accessibility we provided supporting materials in easyread and other formats on request and also held online events across the five themes and welcomed a further 260 people to those sessions at the end of August.

We have analysed these conversations and produced summary reports from what we have learned from the diverse range of experiences and what people would like to see from a National Care Service.

These reports will be published in full on www.gov.scot/ncs on 27 September.

Additionally, due to the success of the regional forums this summer, we are holding a further three events this Autumn in Edinburgh, Hawick and Aberdeen.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

We will also be holding our second National Care Service Forum at the Glasgow Science Centre on 30 October. More than 350 people have already signed up to this event which provides an annual checkpoint for people with lived experience of accessing social care support, unpaid carers, people who work in community health and social care support and other organisations to come together and hear about the progress of the National Care Service and discuss what needs to happen next to deliver the NCS. It will also be an opportunity to share the feedback gathered from the regional co-design events held across Scotland this summer. More information about the agenda will be sent to everyone registered before the event.

I would be grateful if you could encourage those with an interest to attend the NCS forum, either in person or online, and I would like to extend an invitation to members of the committee to the forum, please contact NCSCcommunications@gov.scot or for more information go to www.gov.scot/ncs.

Discussions with local government, NHS and unions

I informed you in my last letter that the Scottish Government and Cosla (on behalf of local government) had reached initial consensus on a partnership approach that will provide for shared legal accountability for integrated health and social care services. Following that initial agreement, officials from Scottish Government and Cosla, and NHS leaders, are continuing to work together to develop more detailed proposals which will in due course inform proposed Government amendments to the Bill.

In order to provide effective national oversight and governance of social work, social care support and community health, we are agreed that the National Care Service will have a national Board.

Overall the aim of the NCS Board will be to ensure consistent, fair, human rights-based social care support and community health services, underpinned by effective complaints and advocacy for people. At the same time, it will support communities in order to maximise the benefits of reformed local delivery of services.

Members of the Board will include Scottish Government, local government, NHS Boards and, importantly, people who access these services and workforce representatives and unpaid carers. The Board will be accountable for standards, guidance and performance metrics, and will set out an agreed escalation framework for when standards are not met. It is expected to be responsible for approval of local strategic plans and ethical commissioning strategies, and will ensure transparency and visibility of data, information and analysis about social care support, social work and community health services through reporting on delivery. This work will also support greater financial transparency.

At local level, local government and NHS Boards will retain statutory delivery functions, staff and assets. Further work will consider how existing integration structures can be reformed and strengthened as part of the National Care Service. This will have particular focus on improving outcomes with, and for, people, enhancing collaborative leadership, embedding the voice of lived experience in governance structures, and improving integrated budgeting and financial planning.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE[™]
We invest in people Silver



My officials have also been continuing regular meetings with Trade Union representatives in relation to both the Bill and the current challenges in the social care system. The views expressed in relation to the NCS will be taken into account in developing the detail of the National Board and measures to strengthen integration at local level. A co-design event is also being arranged specifically for trade union members, in addition to the inclusion of the theme of Valuing the Workforce at a number of the regional forums.

Right to breaks for carers

Aside from the NCS-focused engagement, officials are engaging with carer stakeholders looking at the regulations and guidance that will be needed to implement the right to breaks from caring. This task group involves carer representatives, carer centres, Local Authorities, COSLA and others. It will be looking at the meaning of 'sufficient breaks' (a key term in the Bill); types of breaks to be provided; and transition for carers already receiving support under the existing legislation.

Conclusion

I want to assure you that through these proposed changes the Scottish Government remains committed to improving the quality and consistency of integrated community health, social work and social care support services, with human rights at the heart of the system. These agreements will support the delivery of services that are co-designed with people who access and deliver care and support, enabling people to live their lives as they want to, and supporting and valuing the workforce and unpaid carers.



MAREE TODD MSP

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Silver

