



The professional association for
social work and social workers

Mansfield Traquair Centre
15 Mansfield Place
Edinburgh
EH3 6BB

Telephone: 0131 221 9445
Email: Scotland@basw.co.uk

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Dear Ms Todd

Thank you for your letter yesterday concerning the decision of the Scottish Government not to start Stage 2 this month. I am encouraged by your decision to take time to address the views of all the stakeholders and to ensure that the changes we pursue will make the differences that social workers and the people they support have been asking for. As you say, the social services system needs to improve and this needs to happen in a way that everyone can support. My team and I have already spent four years working with Scottish Government on the Bill and its precursors, and we are committed to finding workable solutions.

A National Care Service was one of the recommendations of the Independent Review of Social Care. The key role that social work plays in assessment, budget allocation and the review of care plans was not addressed. Social workers take all areas of an individuals' life into account and developing options with people and their loved ones to meet both people's rights and their aspirations.

Two of the key drivers of the National Care Service Bill were for improved consistency of access to support across local areas and to ensure that, if people move across the country, they get equivalent support. Other key transitions where people need the most support are also implicated here: from childhood to adulthood, into and out of the hospital and prison systems, for example.

To deliver greater consistency in these areas, assessment and decision-making processes must be led by social workers as accountable and respected professionals rather than driven by local financial, managerial needs, or culture. The social work profession in Scotland should be seen and experienced as a single public service profession with duties beyond those due to its employers. We believe that the plan to establish the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser as an Executive Agency, with the intention to partner with local authorities and Social Work Scotland, is the clearest route and best opportunity to create that greater consistency and continuous improvement in social work across Scotland.

The work on fair work and ethical commissioning must continue at pace. Supported by proper financing, this is the only way we can create a strong and thriving social

care sector, to support people in the ways that they need. Where geographic variation occurs due to workforce and commissioning difficulties, national government must consider options such as subsidisation. The current commissioning model ensures that all financial and business continuity risk falls to care providers. This must change if rural services are to meet the needs of their populations.

We look forward to working closely with you and your officials over the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

Alison

Alison Bavidge
National Director - SASW