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| **Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care**  Kevin Stewart MSP  T: 0300 244 4000  E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot |  |
| Key Stakeholder Reference Group  By e-mail |  |

21 June 2022

**The National Care Service (Scotland) Bill**

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care has formally introduced the above named Bill to the Parliament which has been published today.This Bill sets out principles for the National Care Service (NCS) and also states that it is the duty of the Scottish Ministers to promote a care service designed to secure improvement in the wellbeing of the people of Scotland.

The aim of the Bill is to ensure that everyone can consistently access community health, social care and social work services, regardless of where they live in Scotland. It provides for a National Care Service, accountable to Scottish Ministers, with services designed and delivered locally in line with the expectations of many*.*

The Bill therefore provides for a power to transfer accountability for a range of services, including adult social care and social work services, to the Scottish Ministers, subject to Parliamentary approval. With regard to any potential transfer of children’s services and justice social work services, the Bill requires a further public consultation to be held and the results to be laid before Parliament alongside any regulations. This recognises that those areas were not specifically examined by the Independent Review of Adult Social Care. A final decision on whether to pursue such a transfer in relation to those areas, and how that might be phased, will be subject to further detailed consideration and evidence gathering with key partners.

In addition, the Bill gives Scottish Ministers powers to:

* establish (and dissolve) local and special care boards
* make provision about the membership of care boards and what groups they are required to represent
* establish a scheme and standards for sharing information, to facilitate a nationally-consistent electronic health and care record
* it also requires Ministers to create a charter of rights and responsibilities for social care, with a robust complaints and redress process
* Separately, the Bill will introduce rights to breaks for unpaid carers and visiting rights for residents living in adult care homes. These can be implemented before the National Care Service is established.

Through the creation of the National Care Service, we intend to:

* focus on prevention and early intervention before people’s needs escalate
* support people in their own homes or among family, friends and community wherever possible, with seamless transitions between services
* promote fair employment practices for staff and national pay bargaining
* create a new National Social Work Agency to promote training and development, provide national leadership and set and monitor standards in social work

This is a significant transformation programme for the public sector and it is important that we take the time needed to get it right. To enable our commitment to co-design, the Bill itself creates a framework for future delivery through a National Care Service. In line with our commitment to working with people, partners and stakeholders much of the detail will be developed over the next few years through co-design, with supporting regulations brought forward as necessary. I am very grateful for the input that so many of you have already provided to support the early development of the co-design approach that will be critical to ensuring we make the improvements needed by people.

In the immediate term I look forward to continuing to work with partners and stakeholders on actions and improvements that can be made in advance of new legislation that support the aim of securing improvement in the wellbeing of the people of Scotland. I appreciate that at times this may mean there will be multiple asks of people across our teams that are still rebuilding resilience following the pandemic. It will therefore be necessary for us each to ensure that we lead a programme with the wellbeing of all people at its heart.

A series of documents has been published alongside the Bill; the links are attached [here](https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-care/national-care-service/) for convenience:

* Impact Assessments
* A Statement of Benefits
* A series of evidence papers; and
* A paper on co-design

A case study film featuring the voices of lived experience will be available later today on the Scottish Government [website](https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-care/national-care-service/) and across social media channels. A further five case studies will be released across social media from 25 June.

You will wish to be aware that co-design of the National Care Service will begin this summer with people with lived experience, workforce, trade unions and NHS Boards.

I very much look forward to progressing the National Care Service in collaboration with you all over the months and years ahead.

