



Mr Kevin Stewart MSP
Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care
Scottish Government
Via Email : kevin.stewart@gov.scot

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Our Ref 2022-12-05 NCS
Enquiries to Chris Myers, Chief Officer
Email chris.myers1@borders.scot.nhs.uk

Dear Mr Stewart MSP

NATIONAL CARE SERVICE: REMOTE AND RURAL PATHFINDER

Following recent discussions in the Scottish Borders Council, the Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board, and the NHS Borders Board; we are writing to you to express our interest in becoming a remote and rural pathfinder for the National Care Service, in conjunction with the Scottish Government.

This is because we welcome and support the high level aim of the National Care Service to improve the quality and consistency for Social Work and Social Care services. However, within the context of the Scottish Borders, it is our view that we can improve the way in which the current Bill could be used within the Scottish Borders in line with our local integrated approach while continuing to realise the Scottish Government vision and aims for the National Care Service.

As part of our considerations on the National Care Service Bill, we have started with the question "What is best for the people of the Scottish Borders." Our organisations hold a real sense of public stewardship, and on this basis believe that to achieve the aims of the Bill and manage risks to our communities, we continue to need locally developed, co-produced, innovative solutions that best meet the needs of local people, within the principles of best value.

We would like to propose that we work as partners with the Scottish Government to undertake a pathfinder for the aims, vision and principles of the National Care Service. We have a strong ambition and drive to improve the quality and consistency of Social Work and Social Care services, as well as a number of local enablers which we believe will make this a success.

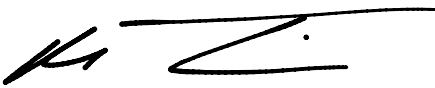
The Scottish Borders covers an expansive rural geography, has strong and unique identities and localism within our communities, has co-terminosity and strong and cohesive relationships with our communities, across our Health and Social Care Partnership, and with our wider Community Planning Partners. We have also spent the past 3 years developing digital enablers for health and social care with our staff and partners in order to better support

those using and providing Health and Social Care services, and have an Outline Business Case using existing non-proprietary technology that aligns to the Scottish Government's Digital health and care strategy vision. We believe that these enablers give us the opportunity to better integrate our approach and would facilitate the pathfinder approach for the National Care Service.

A local pathfinder would be of benefit and support to not only our local population, but also our staff, unpaid carers, and our independent sector, third sector and primary care partners during what is an extremely challenging time for adult Social Care, Social Work and Health services and their staff. Within this pathfinder, we would aim to work to deliver the purpose of the Bill in a seamless integrated way, within our local context, and provide the best possible outcomes for the people of the Scottish Borders, our staff, and our third and independent sector partners.

We hope that you will be in support of this approach, and look forward to hearing from you, as to how this might be approached.

Yours sincerely



Euan Jardine
Leader
Scottish Borders Council



Lucy O'Leary
Chair
Scottish Borders Integration Joint Board



Karen Hamilton
Chair
NHS Borders

cc: *Cllr. David Parker, Executive Member, Health and Wellbeing; and Vice Chair, IJB*
Cllr. Tom Weatherston, Executive Member, Social Work and Community Enhancement
Mr. David Robertson, Chief Executive, Scottish Borders Council
Mr. Ralph Roberts, Chief Executive, NHS Borders
Mr. Chris Myers, Chief Officer, Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board