

Ministear airson Tèarainteachd Shòisealta
Minister for Social Security
Jeane Freeman BPA/MSP



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I am writing to thank you for the support COSLA Leaders gave at the recent meeting on 26 May agreeing that Councils will work with the Scottish Government to help develop and shape the local delivery services of the new social security agency.

From the many conversations I have had and views expressed in the consultation on social security I am clear that the face-to-face support the agency will provide to people must be accessible and joined up with other related services and support. I believe we can achieve this and deliver a truly person centred service worthy of the people of Scotland by working together on the design of the agency's local presence to meet the needs of local communities.

To help with this the Scottish Government is funding a post in COSLA to engage with local government colleagues to explore local delivery options for the agency and help us understand the individual requirements of communities. We are also establishing an Agency Operations Reference Group that will bring together public and third sector organisations with practical experience of delivering local services. While COSLA will of course represent their members wider interests at the Group I am determined to meet my commitment to joined-up local delivery and it would be useful to have an official from your local authority work with us on delivery in your area. If you like to nominate someone or obtain more information please contact Elaine Paterson, in the Social Security Agency Implementation team, at elaine.paterson@gov.scot or on 01312441208.

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I would also like to take this opportunity to update you on the assessment process for the location of the main agency office or offices that will host the central administrative functions. It is my intention that the main office or offices are publically accessible and enhance the delivery of local face to face support. A robust options appraisal is being used to ensure that the final outcome delivers the best possible solution overall for the Scottish people. The methodology follows the same multi criteria approach used for the wider options appraisal and a variety of socio-economic factors are being considered alongside the practical requirements needed to host a large office or offices to ensure all areas are evaluated fairly and equally. We are not seeking bids to host the main agency office or offices. However, I have asked my officials to engage via COSLA over the summer to ensure that Councils have the chance to ask questions to better understand the assessment process and how it fits into the wider local arrangements for the agency.

Thank you again for your continued support and I look forward to us working together.

Kind regards



JEANE FREEMAN

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