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Our Reference: 202100147252
Your Reference: Letter from the Chief Executive of Phoenix Futures Scotland

5 February 2021

Dear Karen Biggs

Thank you for your letter of 15 January 2021 concerning Residential Rehabilitation in Scotland, specifically concerning provision and the need for whole system change. Firstly I wish to thank you for your kind words and congratulations for my appointment as the new Minister for Drugs Policy.

I thank you also for forwarding on and highlighting the recommendations that you had previously sent to the First Minister. Having reviewed this in parallel with the recent recommendations published by the Residential Rehabilitation working group, I can see that most of your points have been included in their own recommendations. Phoenix Futures' representation on this group has been vital and I am glad that you support the rest of the recommendations made by this group in December. I will continue to build on the work of the Residential Rehabilitation Group with my officials. We are currently assessing the capacity and the need for residential placements – so that we can make sure there is capacity to meet demands.

I recognise that funding has often been a barrier to treatment and recovery provision, including residential rehabilitation beds. I welcome the First Minister's announcement on 20 January that an additional £50 million of funding each year, starting from the new financial year until the end of the next Parliament in 2026, will be made available to help tackle this public health crisis. This is the first important step in the right direction.

The Residential Rehabilitation working subgroup has also been undertaking a service mapping exercise, which you can see here: [Residential rehabilitation - service mapping: report - 2019 to 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2020/12/Residential_rehabilitation_-_service_mapping_report_-_2019_to_2020_-_gov.scot). This provides us with valuable information regarding residential rehabilitation provision across Scotland, and how to improve this.

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I look forward to meeting with Phoenix Futures on 17 March and hope that you are able to attend.

Yours sincerely

Redacted

Angela Constance

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Karen Biggs
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15/01/2021

Dear Minister for Drugs Policy

I would like to welcome you into your new post and wish you all the very best success in addressing the issues facing us in Scotland.

I welcome the speech you made in parliament yesterday particularly the compassion with which you spoke and your commitment to creating an open treatment system that meets needs and tackles stigma. Hearing such clarity of message made me feel confident that the issues and challenge at hand was well understood. I look forward to next week and hearing more about the Scottish Governments short, medium and long-term plans, including how residential provision in Scotland can be made equitable with the European average of 11%.

In December 2019 I wrote to the First Minister and set out a number of recommendations for improving access to residential rehabilitation services in Scotland;

1. National commissioning of services to ensure fair access to residential rehab across Scotland
2. Pilot to roll out the best practice Fife model on a national scale
3. All providers that take part in the pilot to commit to providing data that can demonstrate outcomes through an independent academic evaluation

Joe Fitzpatrick visited our residential service in Glasgow and met with myself, residents and the Chair of my Trustees. We welcomed the commitments that followed including the establishment of the Residential Rehabilitation Working Group chaired by Dr David McCartney. The work of that group has had the necessary urgency and robustness of approach and as a member of that group my organisation wholeheartedly supports their recommendations.

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Phoenix Scotland has provided drug treatment including residential rehabilitation in Scotland for nearly 30 years. In 2019 Glasgow ADP took the decision to reduce the number of residential rehabilitation beds they commissioned. Our residential service in Glasgow has 31 large modern en-suite single rooms and is highly accessible for people with additional mobility needs. [Scottish Residential Service | Phoenix Futures \(phoenix-futures.org.uk\)](https://phoenix-futures.org.uk)

We have a state-of-the-art registered care home facility graded as excellent by the Care Inspectorate, however no Glasgow resident can enter our service. Recognising the financial pressure the city was under we offered Glasgow ADP free beds, an offer they refused.

Whilst I welcome your commitment and eagerly await the detail it is important to recognise that if increased access to residential provision is to be achieved a whole system change to the way residential rehabilitation is accessed is required. There are too many empty residential beds in Scotland each night that could be benefiting people in need. Funding is required but won't on its own create equal access.

Your leadership and commitment to increasing access together with the expertise within the sector could however bring about the system change required.

I wish you all the very best and offer an open invitation to visit our service at the earliest opportunity. We can also facilitate a virtual visit during the current Covid restrictions if you would like to discuss your ideas with our residents and staff directly.

Yours Sincerely

Redacted

Karen Biggs
Chief Executive of Phoenix Futures Scotland

Chair of ROSC MEAG, Rights Respect and Recovery