

Councillor Douglas Reid, SNP

Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet
Cabinet Member for Covid Recovery, Strategic Planning,
Community Wealth Building and Regeneration



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DR/DW

Kevin Stewart MSP
Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care
St. Andrew's House
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Dear Kevin

National Care Service (Scotland) Bill

I trust that this letter finds you well. You will recall that I wrote to you in November last year, advising of the joint submission made by East Ayrshire Council and East Ayrshire Integration Joint Board, to the National Care Service for Scotland Consultation. We welcomed the opportunity to meet with you virtually thereafter, to discuss how well integration works here in East Ayrshire and to highlight our concerns regarding the proposals being put forward.

With the publication of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill, we remain deeply concerned about the direction of travel and of the considerable disruption that the proposals will have on the excellent work we are already leading. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's Call for Views and I would confirm that a joint response is once again being made by our Council and Integration Joint Board.

We are concerned that there are still too many questions and unknown factors and that the proposals could have fundamental and unintended consequences for our community and our workforce. It is disappointing that options for improvement within current governance arrangements have been so readily dismissed. This ignores evidence of improvement over many years with the shift from institutional care to the provision of care to people living at home or homely environments. This is not to dismiss the ambition for continual improvement, it is to evidence that this has and can be achieved without dismantling the arrangements that have delivered change.

The response has been agreed unanimously and Council also requested that I forward you a copy of submission and once again invite you to meet with us. I would therefore like to invite you to come to East Ayrshire and would propose to put together a programme, which will demonstrate why we are widely recognised as being a positive example of integration, providing better health and care outcome and which will highlight our commitment to ensuring that our service users, our communities and our workforce are at the heart of everything we do.

I would confirm that I will also be writing to the Chair of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, on behalf of the Council, to ask that we have the opportunity to give further evidence to the Committee and to invite the Committee to see for itself, our approach to integration.

As I said in my previous letter, whatever the future may hold, East Ayrshire remains committed to ensuring that our mature community planning and cross-sectoral relationships are maintained and to delivering services through person-centred and human rights approaches.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope to welcome you to East Ayrshire soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Reid'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

**Councillor Douglas Reid
Leader of the Council
Chair East Ayrshire IJB**