

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/KC

1 November 2021

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

Consultation on National Care Service for Scotland

I trust that this letter finds you well. As the consultation period for a National Care Service for Scotland reaches an end, I wanted to write to you personally, to advise that a joint submission has been made by East Ayrshire Council and East Ayrshire Integration Joint Board.

This is undoubtedly one of the most significant pieces of public service reform that has been put forward in Scotland for many years and I know that you will want to ensure that those who use and deliver services are at the heart of decision making. On a personal level, I very much welcome your commitment, as described within the introduction to the consultation document, that you are listening and that you want to ensure that care is delivered in a way that enables people to live a happy and fulfilled life – not simply care that is delivered to suit the system.

As I am sure you know, here in East Ayrshire, we are incredibly proud of our partnership approach to health and social care. Our ambition and collaboration has served us well and our partnerships go well beyond health and social care and include housing, education, leisure and our support services of Human Resources, Finance and Legal, which are all integral to our success. Working together, we ensure that our service users, our communities and our workforce are at the heart of everything we do and we are widely recognised as being a positive example of integration, providing better health and care outcomes.

I can advise that our response, which was agreed unanimously by the members of both bodies, welcomes the ambition to improve the delivery of social care services across Scotland, but notes that we are not able to support the establishment of National Care Service, in the current proposed format, based on the information available.

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We are totally committed to delivering integrated health and care services, however, it is our view that these particular proposals put forward could cause considerable disruption to the excellent work we are already advancing and could have fundamental and unintended consequences for our community and workforce. We have set out our concerns in line with the structure of the consultation document and I attach a copy, for your ease of reference.

I would want to take the opportunity to invite you to meet with us, so that we can showcase how well integration has worked for us and those we serve and why we have concerns about the proposals put forward, noting that 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.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Reid', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Douglas Reid
Leader of the Council