Dear Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport

Primary Care in Scotland

Thank you for your reply dated 14 December to the Committees letter of 9 November in relation to our brief inquiry into GP and primary care hubs. Having considered the broad range of information provided the Committee have asked me to write and follow up on a number of areas covered in our original letter.

GP role and recruitment

We sought detail on the mechanisms available to government to ensure full co-operation and participation from GPs in the development and delivery of multi-disciplinary team partnerships and we would be pleased to understand how the new contract will assist with this.

We are pleased to note contextualised admission into medicine is being progressed and we recognise this requires a range of actions. In relation to the current academic criteria required we would be grateful to receive detail of any changes taking place. Separately we have written to each of the 5 medical schools in Scotland seeking information on their respective matriculation policies.

The detail around the efforts to encourage returners back into the profession is welcome and we would welcome detail in relation to the work being undertaken to collect and collate accurate information in relation to existing numbers and their origins.

It is encouraging to note consideration being given to “proactive promotion of opportunities in secondary schools” etc. and we are interested in further detail on this work including ways in which this could encourage applications from wider demographic areas.
Information sharing and best practice

The detail around the IT capacity work is welcome and we remain interested in how the funds being made available are being used to assist in the sharing of best and innovative practices. Detail of arrangements currently in place and those being developed in this regard would be of interest to us and relevant to our forthcoming work.

Patient Perspective

We note the efforts and initiatives in place to hear from service users and would also appreciate detail of any specific measures being undertaken to obtain input and views from those communities and individuals most at risk and experiencing health inequalities.

Pharmacy

Finally, in relation to the development of the role of pharmacists could you clarify whether the £16.2m investment that has been made over the last 3 years has successfully recruited the target of 140wte pharmacists and confirm how this funding has been utilised given on a proportionate basis this equates to £115k per post.

I would welcome your further response by 7 February 2017.

Yours sincerely

Neil Findlay MSP
Convener of the Health and Sport Committee