



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Finance and Public Administration Committee

Maree Todd MSP
Minister for Social Care,
Mental Wellbeing and Sport
Scottish Government

By email

All correspondence c/o:

Finance and Public
Administration Committee Clerks
Room T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5219
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
FPA.committee@parliament.scot

30 May 2023

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 9 May 2023 in which you set out your plans to continue engagement and co-design activities relating to the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill throughout the summer.

We note that, in your evidence to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on 9 May 2023, you stated that you “do not want to have to give multiple updates of the financial memorandum between now and the usual time when you would get an update.” We are disappointed that you did not first inform this Committee of your approach given our formal role in scrutinising the Financial Memorandum. We consider this discourteous, particularly given the Finance and Public Administration Committee has yet to receive a formal response to our report on the NCS Bill. We ask that in future you inform this Committee at the earliest opportunity of any future developments relating to the Financial Memorandum for the Bill.

The Committee is concerned by the above statement, which you reiterated in your letter of 9 May, that “it is not usual to provide any revision of the Financial Memorandum for a Bill until after Stage 2, and then only to reflect any changes that have been made to the provisions of the Bill”, and that you “do not wish to confuse matters by providing multiple versions”. As you will be aware, the Committee requested an updated FM prior to the Stage 1 debate, due to the lack of detail in the

original FM. Whilst not usual, it is the Committee's position that this is entirely necessary in order to inform Members' votes on the general principles of a Bill- described by the Scottish Government as "most ambitious reform of public services since the creation of the NHS".

Furthermore, we have previously been given assurances by the Scottish Government that an updated FM was being developed and would be provided to the Committee. For example, the former Deputy First Minister, in response to the Committee's report on the Scottish Budget 2023-24 dated 3 February 2023, confirmed that an updated FM "is being prepared in response to the Committee's report [on the NCS Bill's FM] of 1 December, which will provide more detail on expected spend in 2023-24 and beyond". This was further confirmed during oral evidence on 7 February 2023, when the former Deputy First Minister told this Committee that the maximum cost of the NCS Bill in the following financial year "is likely to be a figure no higher than £50 million", adding however that the updated FM "will give greater confidence around that point".

We therefore seek confirmation that you will provide this Committee with the requested update to the Financial Memorandum, alongside the Scottish Government's response to the Committee's report, at least four weeks before the new date of the Stage 1 debate on the Bill, as committed to by your predecessor.

The Committee is also concerned at the reference in your letter of 9 May that "it is not possible to separate costs relating to the provisions of the Bill and those which result from the wider NCS programme". Given this Committee has already sought greater clarity over the costs of the Bill in its report, we seek an explanation of why, at this early stage, the costs of the NCS Bill cannot be separated from the wider NCS programme and what steps you will put in place to enable this separation of costs to be made going forward, so we can fully understand the best estimates of the Bill.

I look forward to hearing from you by 21 June 2023.

Yours sincerely

Michael Marra MSP
Deputy Convener
Finance and Public Administration Committee