

E: MinisterSCMW@gov.scot

Clare Haughey MSP
Convener of the Health, Social Care and Sport
Committee
Scottish Parliament

18 March 2025

Dear Clare,

VOLUNTARY SECTORAL BARGAINING IN SOCIAL CARE

I am writing to the Committee to provide you with an update on the voluntary sectoral bargaining work that was part of the Government's 2021 Manifesto.

The Scottish Government has been working in collaboration with stakeholders, including trade unions and provider representatives, through the Fair Work in Social Care Group (FWiSCG) to establish voluntary sectoral bargaining arrangements for the commissioned adult social care sector.

These arrangements were agreed by the Cabinet on 10 March, and Scottish Government officials will begin work to allow for the establishment of the body in 2026.

In addition, the Scottish Government is taking immediate action to improve conditions for workers delivering commissioned services in the private, voluntary and independent sector, including:

- providing funding to support an increase in maternity and paternity entitlements to bring them in line with that of staff employed directly by local government; and
- providing funding to pay for Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks for workers.

[The current proposal is to deploy the Voluntary Sectoral Bargaining Arrangement for the Scottish Social Care Sector in 2027-28, and, in 2028-29 (or at a future date to be determined by Scottish Ministers) transition to a legislative process, as provided through the Employment Rights Act 2025. This will allow for a full evaluation of the operational effectiveness of both models, noting that both England and Wales are expected to adopt the mandated option for implementation in 2027/28.]

We will now move into the next phase of preparations to establish the voluntary sectoral bargaining body, ensuring that the necessary governance, operational arrangements and stakeholder processes are fully in place.

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We will continue to work closely with the NCS Advisory Board and the Fair Work in Social Care Group throughout this period to maintain clear alignment with Fair Work principles and to support a smooth transition into the new arrangements.

Kind Regards,



TOM ARTHUR

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