



Chairman's Office

Date: 1 April 2008
Tel: 0141 225 0094
Ref: LAB/284

Ms Claire Ferguson
Scottish Government
Directorate General Health and Wellbeing
Area 2E(N)
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
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Dear Ms Ferguson

Local Healthcare Bill – NHS 24 Response to Consultation Document

Whilst recognising that the focus of the Local Healthcare Bill is on territorial NHS Boards, it was felt appropriate by the Board of NHS 24 to respond in general terms to the consultation document as a consequence of its close relationships with partner Boards.

In considering the detailed questions posed the Board would wish to make the following comments and hope that this might add a different dimension to the discussion:

- NHS 24 fully supports the involvement of patients and the public in decisions about how its services are designed and delivered and demonstrates this commitment through the establishment of the Public Patient Forum, patient representation on its Clinical Governance Committee and through the delivery of its comprehensive PFPI Strategy and Framework. In addition, NHS 24 responded to the consultation on independent scrutiny, a copy of which is attached for ease of reference.
- NHS 24 would support a review of the Scottish Health Council towards a more supporting rather than directive role in order to ensure more effective public engagement and involvement across the service, e.g. this might include facilitating access by Special Boards to NHS Board patient networks.

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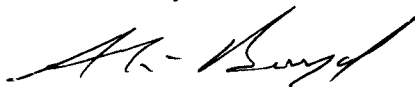
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- The appointment process currently followed by the Public Appointments Unit seeks applications from across the Scottish public and we note that the government has set overall targets to address the under-representation of some groups (including equal representation from men and women, pro rata representation of people from black and minority backgrounds and increased participation of disabled people). It may be appropriate to review and monitor these targets to ensure appropriate public representation, e.g. broadening across all equality and diversity strands. Consideration may also usefully be given to the language used in the Appointment Unit's documentation to ensure that under-represented groups can more readily see the potential value they will bring to the role of Board Member.
- NHS 24 has experience of using pilots to test proposals and related assumptions and suggests that this would be a useful way to evaluate the proposals being made in the consultation document. For example, a pilot could be used measure the actual costs of direct elections and the necessary demonstration of value-for-money.

NHS 24 is currently engaged in a comprehensive programme of work which will ensure our services are equally accessible to the diverse communities of people in Scotland and that our workforce reflects that diversity. Although we are conscious that there are currently no plans to extend the proposals to Special Health Boards we would like to place on record our belief that to do so would pose additional challenges and costs to organisations such as ours due to their national coverage.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the consultation process. I trust that the above comments are of interest and value.

Yours sincerely



Alison Boyd
Board Secretary
NHS 24

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