

DG Health and Social  
Care/CE NHS Scotland  
12 March 2024

First Minister  
Deputy First Minister  
Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care

## **RESIGNATION OF NATIONAL CLINICAL DIRECTOR**

### **PRIORITY AND PURPOSE**

1. To make you aware of the resignation of the National Clinical Director, Jason Leitch.
2. **Urgent.** Jason's intention to resign at the end of April 2024 is expected to become public knowledge relatively quickly and Comms colleagues are keen to adopt a proactive with any media lines.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

3. To note Jason Leitch's intention to resign from his role as National Clinical Director and from his employment with NHS Tayside on 30 April 2024. Further comms lines are being developed in conjunction with colleagues over the course of today.

### **CONTEXT AND ISSUES**

4. On 11 March 2024, Jason wrote to indicate his resignation from his position as National Clinical Director and from his employment with NHS Tayside with effect from 30 April 2024.
5. Jason has worked with the Health and Social Care Directorates in a number of roles, supported by a Service Level Agreement, since 2007. He has been a hugely influential figure in the health and care system over that time and an enormously valuable member of my senior team.
6. He is globally recognised for his work in the advancement of quality improvement and patient safety and was instrumental in the world's first ever programme at the scale of a national healthcare system. Jason led the Scottish Patient Safety Programme (SPSP), which improved the quality of care of tens of thousands of lives in Scotland and then ensured the learning from it was shared internationally. That meant, in Scotland, 30,000 fewer than expected deaths and a Scottish system that was globally recognised as a best in class safety culture. Jason's expertise was deployed to full effect when he was appointed to the NHS England review group led by Don Berwick into the patient safety elements of the Francis Inquiry.
7. He has led the spread of improvement and change sciences to the broader Scottish public and third sectors including education and criminal justice. Internationally, he teaches and lectures across the world. He is also a Board member of two large international charities, the Nazareth Trust which runs a hospital and nursing school in Northern Israel and the Indian Rural Evangelical Fellowship which runs an orphanage, college and nursing school in rural south-east India.
8. During Covid, Jason frequently supported the regular media briefings as well as providing expert contributions on tv, radio and in the press.

9. As I continue to flex my Directorates in order to support the continued recovery of the health and care system, I will now take time to consider how best to address the gap in my team that Jason leaves.

#### **BUTE HOUSE AGREEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

10. No implications.

#### **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

11. No implications.

#### **SENSITIVITIES**

12. During the early modules of the Covid Inquiry there have been queries raised around some of the informal WhatsApp exchanges with Ministers that Jason was involved in. His engagement through a Service Level Agreement has also been the subject of scrutiny.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

13. This submission has been approved by Caroline Lamb, DG Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland.

#### **CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

14. To note Jason Leitch's intention to resign from his role as National Clinical Director and from his contract with NHS Tayside with effect from 30 April 2024.
15. Health Communications colleagues are now finalising media lines, working with colleagues in NHS Tayside.
16. As Director General, I will also seek to make time to speak with Jason, to gather his reflections from his time in role and any lessons that we should consider based on his experience. This will also inform my consideration of how we move to replace his unique skills and experience.

**Caroline Lamb**

DG Health and Social Care/CE NHS Scotland

12 March 2024

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Public Health and Women's Health					X
Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport					X
Permanent Secretary DG Health & Social Care John Burns Jennie Gollan Communications NHS Recovery, Health & Social Care [Redacted staff names in A-C Bands] Nicky Richards					