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Our Reference: 202300353510
Your Reference: Funding of the Gypsy/Traveller Community Health Worker Service

24 May 2023

Ms Maggie,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 April 2023 to the Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care, Michael Matheson MSP, regarding funding of the Gypsy/Traveller Community Health Worker Service. I have been asked to respond on his behalf as Gypsy/Traveller health is part of my Ministerial portfolio.

I welcome the Committee's interest in this service and its ongoing sustainability. I am pleased to be able to inform you that Scottish Government has confirmed a final year of funding that will enable the service to continue for the remainder of the current financial year (2023-24). This additional funding guarantees continuity of provision in 2023-24 as plans for mainstreaming improvements from 2024-25 onwards are made, recognising the clear need for improved services within the Gypsy/Traveller community given the specific barriers and challenges they continue to face in accessing health and other vital services.

The priority now is to secure the longer-term sustainability of the service beyond this financial year by mainstreaming it in Health Board core service provision. To that end, the NHS Scotland Gypsy/Traveller Steering Group, chaired by Josephine Pravinkumar, Director of Public Health, NHS Lanarkshire, is in the process of establishing a short life working group which will identify the most appropriate model going forward to ensure improved access to and experience of healthcare for the Gypsy/Traveller community. Officials from Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland are actively supporting this work.

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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There is significant learning from the existing model and approach that has been taken by MECOPP and I am keen to ensure that the key aspects of the service are maintained and built upon as the service develops. The short-life working group, which will include Health Board representation, will consider how best to do this and likely changes to how the programme might operate in the future.

I hope this information reassures the Committee about the immediate future of the provision, as well as the work underway to ensure the longer term improvement of services to better meet the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community.

Regards,



Jenni Minto MSP

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