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Gillian Martin MSP, Convener
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
Scottish Parliament

By email.

20 December 2022

Dear Gillian,

National Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care – Workforce Projections

I am writing to set out my intentions with regard to the forthcoming publication of Workforce Projections for the Health and Adult Social Care Workforces. I can confirm that the Scottish Government will publish workforce projections early in 2023, before the end of the current financial year, pursuant to the commitment made in the National Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care.

My officials continue to work closely with colleagues from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), with a view to the Scottish Government and CoSLA jointly publishing staffing projections.

The Committee may wish to note that extensive work has already taken place involving engagement with stakeholders to understand different user needs, and these have been actively included in the specification for the Projections model. As part of this work, officials have also reached a number of early, high-level conclusions which indicate that:

- Further workforce growth, from current record staffing levels in Health and Social Care, will be required between now and 2030, across the health and social care workforces, to successfully respond to known demographic trends within Scotland's population, including current forecasting assumptions about the burden of disease and social care demand.
- Notwithstanding the fact that further workforce growth will be required, the relationship between service demand and workforce demand is heavily influenced by other factors including our investment in new roles and the reform of existing job roles, alongside service model reform, investment in technology, artificial intelligence and new skills. Accordingly, longer range forecasting is subject to change and this is reflected our projections model.

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- Projected workforce demand in the short-medium term will continue to need to be managed through a portfolio approach to operational workforce planning, in accordance with the framework set out in the National Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy. Through this approach we will continue to invest, at historically high levels, in the education and training of pre-registration healthcare professionals, continue to invest in widening access, apprenticeships, role diversification and role reform, and continue to invest in ethical and proportionate international recruitment of qualified health and care staff, to supplement domestic supply routes, in line with projected needs.

When published, our Health and Social Care Workforce Projections will set out further information and conclusions, the methodology used to develop the model, the assumptions on which it is based, and our proposed next steps for the ongoing improvement and iterative development of the projections modelling. As indicated in the National Workforce Strategy, we will subsequently periodically update our published projections, taking a continuous improvement approach.

Meantime, Committee members may wish to note that significant work has taken place since publication of the National Workforce Strategy to support delivery of our health and social care services and our recovery, growth and transformation ambitions. This includes; the introduction of new national guidelines on retire and return, making it easier for retiring NHS staff to return to support the NHS while drawing their pension; the investment of a record £11m over the lifetime of this Parliament in further domestic and international recruitment, and a new target for international recruitment of nurses, midwives and allied health professionals supported by up to £7.98m of in-year funding; and record pay offer in 2022/23 of an average 7.5% rise for our hard working Agenda for Change Staff.

I hope you have found this update helpful I will keep you and Members fully informed in anticipation of publication of the projections model early in 2023.

Yours sincerely,



HUMZA YOUSAF

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