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The Scottish Parliament
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I am writing in response to the former Convener, Gillian Martin’s letter of 29 March addressed to the First Minister, Humza Yousaf, in relation to the Stage 1 timetable for the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill. I will be responsible for this Bill going forward, working with Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care.

This Government remains committed to delivering a National Care Service to improve quality, fairness and consistency of provision that meets individuals’ needs. The scale of this ambition will require the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill to progress in order to ensure sustainable social care services moving forward.

We wish to use the time ahead of the Stage 1 debate to find compromise and reach consensus with those who have raised concerns during the Stage 1 scrutiny undertaken so far. As you note, the Stage 1 debate is currently timetabled for the end of June. However, we see value in continuing engagement and co-design activities through summer before moving to the next stage of the Bill.

As you are aware, Stage 1 deadlines for Bills are agreed by Parliament. Therefore, it is my intention that the Minister for Parliamentary Business will seek Parliament’s approval, via the parliamentary Bureau, to extend the Stage 1 deadline beyond June. Officials will be in touch with clerks to discuss this further in due course. I am copying this letter to Business Managers for their awareness.

In terms of engagement, the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care met regularly with a range of stakeholders, including COSLA and the unions, who are key partners in the delivery of the NCS, and I intend to continue that approach. The Scottish Government remains committed to on-going engagement and co-design with a wide range of people who access social care support, as well as the workforce, and this will be the focus of our engagement over the summer. We will hold a series of regional Forums, providing an opportunity for Ministers and officials to engage directly with people with lived experience of accessing and delivering social care support locally. Committee members would be very

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welcome to participate in these events. We will also continue and deepen our co-design activity, in line with the five themes of:

- information sharing to improve social care support
- keeping social care support local
- realising rights and responsibilities
- making sure your voice is heard
- valuing the workforce

I am happy to provide more information to the Committee when it is available.



Maree Todd

Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport

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