



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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28 May 2024

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

### **Follow up evidence - Healthcare in Remote and Rural Areas**

Thank you for your evidence to the Committee on 21 May to further our inquiry into healthcare in remote and rural areas.

Your evidence, alongside all other evidence taken during the inquiry, will be essential when it comes to writing the report and recommendations. The Committee would, however, be grateful for further clarity on some of the points raised during the session.

These have been outlined below –

1. Firstly, regarding development of the National Centre for Remote and Rural Health and Care, you mentioned in your answer that “the task and finish group is meeting right now” to discuss continuing work on the Rural and Island Workforce Recruitment Strategy.

The Committee would be grateful for an update on the progress of this strategy, as well as further information as to the role, make-up, and remit of the “Task and Finish Group”.

Is it intended that the minutes from these meetings will be published, and can the Committee be provided with a copy?

2. Mr Lea-Ross, in answer to questions regarding practical developments from the Centre, referenced that much of the focus so far has been on developing and delivering education and training initiatives, principally to rural advanced practitioners and multi-disciplinary teams.

The Committee would ask for an outline as to how many initiatives have so far been developed and actioned by the Centre, what stage future initiatives are at, and what targets the Centre is operating to in terms of delivery of said initiatives. Is there a target for the number of initiatives to be delivered before the end of the year?

3. In response to Ruth Maguire MSP, you referenced the single island authority model and referenced that work is ongoing to look at what is possible to ensure local government and health boards work closer together. The Committee would be grateful for an update on these “advanced discussions” as soon as is practicable.
4. In response to Ruth Maguire MSP’s question on integration from various authorities, particularly regarding wider issues impacting service delivery such as housing and childcare, and the seemingly lack of progress being made, you stated you would be able to follow-up on this in writing.

The Committee would be grateful to receive this further evidence as well as any examples of the Scottish Government successfully facilitating these discussions.

5. You stated that there was 10 per cent drop in workforce due to Brexit – would you be able to provide a source for this figure referred to?
6. In response to Carol Mochan MSP’s question regarding issues with AHPs, you stated you would be able to report back on AHP links with universities and the provision of a flexible model. The Committee would be grateful for an update on any discussions had with relevant stakeholders and future-plans when available.
7. In response to Sandesh Gulhane MSP’s question regarding digital connectivity in rural areas, you committed to providing information from your colleagues in the Economy portfolio as to the work being done with service providers in rural and island communities to improve availability of mobile internet connectivity. The Committee would be grateful to receive this further information.

Thank you again for taking the time to give evidence to the Committee. We look forward to your response to the above in due course, but ideally no later than **27 June 2024**.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "CHaughey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'H' and 'y'.

Clare Haughey MSP  
Convener, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee