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Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
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Dear Convenor

I am writing to advise the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee that later today I will announce new targets to eliminate long waits for planned care. The targets are to eliminate:

- two year waits for outpatients in most specialities by the end of August 2022
- 18 months for outpatients in most specialities by the end of December 2022
- one year for outpatients in most specialities by the end of March 2023
- two years for inpatient / daycases in most specialities by the end of September 2022
- 18 months for inpatient / daycases in most specialities by the end of September 2023
- one year for inpatient / daycases in most specialities by the end of September 2024

I am in no doubt these targets are ambitious and will require a strong focussed approach to successfully achieve them. NHS Scotland continues to experience extreme pressure and a high level of uncertainty remains over future waves of the pandemic. However, we need to build a system that can live with the virus, which does not impact on the delivery of services such as planned care. Managing long waits must be central to this as we move towards delivering our ambition to protect, stabilise and recover planned care.

A letter has also been issued to Board Chief Executives today setting out the direction of travel. Delivery of these targets will be done through a joined up NHS Scotland approach. We will work closely with Boards, including the NHS Golden Jubilee and the Centre for Sustainable Delivery, to map the areas of greatest challenge in order to maximise support for these Boards. We will do this in various ways including through maximising theatre sessions, cross boundary working, regionally and nationally, and maximising efficiencies.

We will put in place a robust governance process to provide strategic direction for the programmes of work, monitoring progress, and supporting local boards to embed

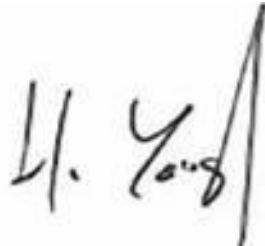
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improvements, including the introduction of new ways of delivering care that will create additional capacity.

You will also be aware that a review of the National Waiting Times Guidance is already underway. Where we are required to amend policy to provide Boards with the flexibility to work regionally or nationally then this will be expedited and updates made retrospectively as required.

I look forward to updating the Committee on our progress towards meeting these targets in the near future.



HUMZA YOUSAF

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