

Ministear airson Slàinte Phoblach is Slàinte
Bhoireannach
Jenni Minto BPA



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Minister for Public Health and Women's Health
Jenni Minto MSP

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Clare Haughey MSP
Convener, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By Email: HSCS.committee@Parliament.Scot

30 August 2023

Dear Clare,

Thank you for your letter of 23 June 2023 asking for an update on the progress of the Best Start North Review and an indication of when it is likely to conclude.

NHS Grampian, NHS Highland and the three Island NHS Boards commissioned the Best Start North Review to look at maternity and neonatal services in the North of Scotland in 2020. The Best Start North Review group was chaired by Professor Caroline Hiscox, now Chief Executive of NHS Grampian, in her former role as Executive Nurse Director at NHS Grampian.

The participating NHS Boards confirmed that the initial phase of the review ended with an internal report produced by the Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre (DHI) in December 2020, informing NHS Boards and their Chief Executives of its recommendations. I understand that the report was not formally published. It was, however, released publicly by the Scottish Government in response to a Freedom of Information request in August 2022.

The work of the Best Start North Review was then superseded by the independent Moray Maternity Services Review, published on 3 December 2021. NHS Highland has advised that no further phases of the Best Start North Review have been commissioned. As you will likely be aware, work continues to explore the networked model for services in the North, linking NHS Highland with NHS Grampian. This work, however, remains separate and distinct from the former 'Best Start North Group.'

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Taigh Naomh Anndrais, Rathad Regent, Dùn Èideann EH1 3DG
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



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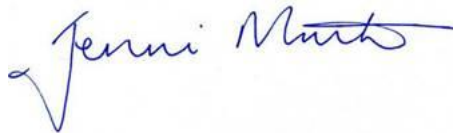
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However, NHS Boards in the North of Scotland continue to collaborate around a shared vision of continuous improvement in maternity services. For example, I have been informed that senior midwives from NHS Grampian, NHS Highland, the three Island NHS Boards and NHS Tayside are working together, under the sponsorship of the local NHS Boards' Chief Executives, to contribute to the work of the National Maternity Workforce and Education Group, chaired by NHS Education for Scotland (NES). The North of Scotland group, previously referred to as Best Start North, is chaired by Kathleen Carolan, Director of Nursing & Acute Services, NHS Shetland.

I hope you will find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Jenni Minto MSP

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