

Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport
Maree Todd MSP
Ministear airson Cùram Sòisealta, Sunnd Inntinn is
Spòrs
Maree Todd BPA



T: 0300 244 4000
E: MinisterforSCMWS@gov.scot

Clare Haughey
Convener
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

07 August 2024

Dear Ms Haughey,

INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO THE DELIVERY OF FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES - UPDATE ON IMPROVING STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE – RECOMMENDATION ONE

I am writing to update the Committee about plans to improve strategic planning and governance of Forensic Mental Health Services and my thoughts on the next steps of implementing Recommendation One of the Independent review into the delivery of forensic mental health services. The Review recommended that a new NHS Health Board should be created for forensic services across Scotland.

The Government's published response to this recommendation was to establish a short life working group to agree an approach that would deliver increased support for planning, collaboration and improvement of forensic mental health services. The intention was to fully test the proposal for a new Board against other options, given the resources that would be required.

As the committee will be aware, the group undertook an options appraisal exercise which produced no clear preference between Barron's recommendation, that a NHS Forensic Board be established; and the two alternatives. Overall, the outcome of the Options Appraisal Process suggests that continuing the status quo (individual Health Boards and Network) for the strategic governance and planning of forensic mental health services in Scotland was not supported. A copy of this report can be found on the Scottish Government [website](#).

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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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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Forensic Mental Health Board for Scotland

I have been considering the outputs of this options appraisal with my officials in the context of recent governance developments in Health and Social Care, including the creation of the NCS and the NHS Scotland Planning and Delivery Board. I have now taken a view on the desired way to move forward.

I have asked my officials to begin putting in place plans to establish a “**Forensic Mental Health Board for Scotland**” with the aim of delivering a national approach to planning and governance of forensic mental health in-patient services, which is in line with our population needs based approach to planning of our acute services. This Board will be created by utilising existing legislation and functions of The State Hospital Board for Scotland.

Given the complexity of developing a more coherent governance model, there are still a number of options and details that will need to be considered as a priority to identify a practical and legal way to move forward. Therefore, my intention is to establish a “*Forensic Governance Advisory Group*” to engage with stakeholders across the system to support the development of this new Board.

This group will advise on the operational, legal and changes needed to transition from existing governance arrangements to a Board with responsibilities for forensic mental health services beyond The State Hospital. The group will set out an implementation plan for the transition to the new Board.

I hope that this is a helpful update for the Committee and I intend to provide regular updates on progress as this work progresses.

Yours sincerely,



Maree Todd MSP

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