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Mr Lewis Macdonald MSP
Convener
Health and Sport Committee

By Email – HealthandSport@parliament.scot

31st January 2020

Dear Lewis,

INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN TAYSIDE

I last wrote to the committee on 20th June 2019 following publication of the Independent Inquiry's Interim report and assured the committee of both the Scottish Government and NHS Tayside commitment to the Inquiry.

I now write in advance of the publication of the final report which is due on the 5th February, to inform the Health and Sport Committee of the support that has been provided by the Scottish Government thus far and outline the enhanced support package that we have been working with NHS Tayside and its delivery partners to secure.

From my ongoing engagement with key stakeholders in Tayside, such as the staff representatives the Cabinet Secretary for Health & Sport and I met earlier this week, it is clear that significant concerns remain. These concerns must be addressed and I have made my expectations clear that the people of Tayside must have access to high quality, safe and effective services and have trust and confidence in the services provided.

As you are aware, it was NHS Tayside who commissioned the Independent Inquiry. NHS Tayside and local partners have confirmed that they will respond to the findings of the Inquiry when the final report becomes available. They have already agreed a number of measures to ensure rapid progress in taking forward the Inquiry's forthcoming recommendations. These include the development of a detailed action plan, new arrangements to ensure effective delivery and strong leadership commitment across all agencies.

Since the publication of the interim report last year, the Scottish Government has supported NHS Tayside and its partners by facilitating connections with other NHS Boards and the Royal College of Psychiatrists to share learning and professional practice.

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In the coming weeks, this support will be intensified to address service provision, clinical practice, organisational development and community led services. In particular, we will work with NHS Tayside to secure;

- Multi-disciplinary clinical and practice support, bringing specialists from across a range of mental health specialities and backgrounds to provide support and challenge;
- Communications and Engagement expertise ;
- Organisational development expertise to support culture change;
- Agreement with the Royal College of Psychiatry's UK College Centre for Quality Improvement (CCQI) to assess the quality of clinical services and areas for improvement;
- Engagement with the Royal College of Psychiatrists to provide senior support and guidance and;
- Programme management support to enable delivery of Tayside's improvement plan.

The Scottish Government will monitor NHS Tayside's progress through the continuation of the NHS Tayside Oversight group and will continue to seek assurance that the required improvements are being implemented, working alongside COSLA to ensure NHS Boards, Councils and Integration Joint Boards are supported to work together across Scotland to build on the recommendations.

All this activity will be focused on ensuring significant improvement in Mental Health services across Tayside. To provide further assurance that the necessary progress has been made, the Chair of the Independent Inquiry, David Strang, has agreed to undertake a progress update in February 2021 to monitor whether the required improvements have been made.

Furthermore, I announced last year that I would look to establish a national approach to the quality and safety of mental health services, ensuring that the themes and concerns identified within the Tayside Independent Inquiry are not present elsewhere in Scotland. I therefore look forward to chairing the first meeting of the new Quality & Safety Board on 19 February 2020. I am delighted that David Strang will be attending this meeting which will be an excellent platform to share the learnings of the report with other partners.

Kind regards,



CLARE HAUGHEY

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