



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Jeane Freeman
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Via email only

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Dear Jeane

Thank you for giving evidence to the Committee on 25 February on the 20-21 budget. While it seems a long time ago since you appeared, and it is recognised the financial outlook will be markedly different once the current crisis subsides, there are a number of areas from the budget that the Committee would like to follow up with you.

This letter seeks further information and clarification in a number of areas but in particular with regard to planning, monitoring and reporting. For ease and context I refer to specific passages from the Official Report of 25 February.

In your opening statement you referred to NRAC while indicating all Boards were within 0.8% of parity. Both Miles Briggs and Emma Harper later followed up on this line of questioning (cols 17 & 18). You offered to provide the latest figures for each Board showing their position relative to NRAC and I look forward to that information.

At column 2 you referred to increasing investment in social care and integration of £100 million to a total of £811 million from the health portfolio. Is there a mechanism for ensuring that these additional sums are allocated to integration authorities once they are transferred to the local authorities? Are you able to confirm that these additional sums have been assigned to integration authorities in previous years?

Also in your opening statement (col 3) you referred to the support being provided to provide opportunities for all to participate in sport and physical activity. Brian Whittle subsequently asked questions on this aspect (cols 27-30). You also referred to social prescribing and indicated how the education budget, and football clubs, were contributors in this regard. This led to discussion on the Committees recent [report](#)

into social prescribing which was debated on 18 February 2020 and in particular the recommendation that 5% of the Integrated Authorities budget should be spent on social prescribing, which you accepted as a recommendation you were very happy to discuss with them. We have received figures from Grampian but not others, can you advise how this spend can be monitored and reported. Does the Scottish Government agree with our recommendation and will you urge Integration Authorities to meet our recommendations?

In relation to the medium-term health and social care financial framework there was discussion at col 6 when it was indicated savings of 3.9% were being sought from Boards in 20-21 and that this will contribute towards addressing the funding gap of £159 million that was identified in the medium-term health and social care financial framework. At col 7, you indicated that you would be able to provide the Committee with an update on progress towards meeting the £159 million funding gap. The Committee would welcome an update on this.

When discussing with Emma Harper (col 8) the roll-out of “attend anywhere” and “hospital-at-home” etc you set out the intention, over time, to evidence overall savings in costs and patient time. Will you also be able to identify and measure the extent to which these services are successful for patients, for example how many were able to stay out of acute care settings and how many patients these schemes allowed to remain permanently at home or in the community?

There were lengthy discussions on brokerage (col 9 onwards) and in effect the Committee were told all Boards receiving brokerage were expected to break even in every rolling 3 year period. That suggests for those Boards who have indicated they will not break even in the current financial year they will require to finish one or both of the subsequent years in surplus to offset all of this year’s deficit. We were also told that Boards will only require to consider how (current) brokerage will require to be repaid once they return to financial balance. Can you confirm that all Boards should be in balance during the 3 year cycle 2019-2022 and confirm they each have agreed plans to achieve that.

On Ophthalmic services (col 16) you highlighted both the preventative work being undertaken and the care provided to out-patients in acute settings. You saw an increase in demand in the community reducing demand in acute settings being delivered through a combination of using both existing under-utilisation of skills and investments already made. An increase in productivity with declining real term costs is to be applauded. Can you provide further details of the improvements that you refer to in community-based optometry that have informed your decision on the budget allocation in this area? Also, can you advise what work is ongoing to identify similar benefits that could be obtained from other areas of health and social care.

Now that the report from the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland has been published (col19), can you confirm when the health capital investment strategy will be published?

In relation to Drug and Alcohol Partnerships (col 22) there was discussion about progress in services being audited. Can you indicate when audits will be available and also provide an update on discussions with COSLA in relation to the reporting of outcomes and other measures.

Sandra White (col 24) asked about the reporting of Integration Authority budgets and you explained that reports were provided quarterly, ten weeks after the end of the period. The Committee has highlighted before that this delay means that it cannot scrutinise integration authority budgets until the September after they are agreed. Could you elaborate on why it is not possible for the Parliament to receive more timely reports on the £9.4 billion it allocates for spend in this area.

On set aside (col 24) are you able to indicate how much has been set aside in the last 12 months for reinvestment?

Finally will you update the Committee on when the statutory guidance on engagement by integration authorities (col 30) will be ready.

I appreciate focus across Government will be on addressing the current crisis and I would be happy to receive a response by 16 May. It would also be helpful for the Committee to receive an update on how additional coronavirus funds received via Barnett consequential are being allocated, including in relation to Sport.

Yours sincerely



Lewis Macdonald

Convener, Health and Sport Committee