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Lewis Macdonald MSP
Convener
Health and Sport Committee

By Email.

24 April 2020

Dear Lewis,

Covid-19: Death in Service Benefit for NHS Scotland Staff

You may recall that I wrote to the Committee recently (1 April 2020) to signal my intention to offer a temporary COVID-19 death in service benefit to those staff not covered by membership of an NHS pension scheme, including NHS locum and NHS bank staff.

Following further discussions with the principal health service trade unions, I have now confirmed the Scottish Government's intention to bring forward bespoke administrative arrangements to establish a scheme that provides a death in service lump sum and survivor's benefits to all staff directly employed by NHS Scotland Boards, alongside staff who are providing NHS services. As set out above, the scheme will provide benefits in circumstances where staff are not covered by membership of an existing NHS pension scheme, and in circumstances where staff would not be entitled to the maximum pension benefit available under their existing arrangements, the scheme will step in to provide the difference.

My officials are working at pace with NHS Employers and our trade union partners to finalise the scheme's terms and conditions; we aim to publish a Statement of Scheme Particulars by 1 May 2020, at which time I will share the details with the committee. It is hoped that the scheme will then formally be introduced shortly thereafter, and I have confirmed my intention for the scheme benefits to apply retrospectively, to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged.

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I firmly believe this is the right thing to do. I am truly humbled by the exceptional hard-work, commitment and on-going dedication to service that has been demonstrated by our NHS Staff across Scotland, as we take forward our response to this pandemic. They have the right to know that should the worst happen we will continue to support their families and loved ones, in accordance with our NHS values and principles.

Kind regards,

JEANE FREEMAN

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