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By email.

16 February 2023

Dear Jaki

Ministerial Taskforce on Nursing and Midwifery – Information embargoed until Tuesday 21 February 00:01 hours

Further to our extensive engagement over recent weeks, I am writing to confirm my intention to convene a Ministerial Taskforce on Nursing and Midwifery, specifically to promote and enhance the value and contribution of the distinct nursing and midwifery professions in Scotland, and to identify the key activity that will support the two professions in the context of their shared, as well as their distinct challenges, in building a sustainable, attractive, fair, flexible, respected and empowered workforce for the future.

The Ministerial Taskforce will support the realisation of the long-term vision set out in the National Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy. It will provide the drive and impetus to ensure that collective action is taken, across the whole health and care system, to address current challenges to the midwifery profession in relation to workforce supply, retention and professional development across clinical, education, research and leadership pathways, the need for leadership structures that support compassionate leadership, and which also ensures that the voice of Midwifery is heard at board level. In doing so, it will ensure that the profession is equipped and supported to meet the needs of the women and families it cares for, whilst supporting the needs of the profession to have access to fair, responsive and flexible workplaces. I enclose a copy of the draft terms of reference (TOR). The TOR reflects the detailed discussions my officials have had with you in recent days, these will be finalised and adopted at the first meeting of the Taskforce, which I will convene as soon as is practicable.

As you will note from the draft TOR, the Ministerial Taskforce will focus on the core work needs of midwives and the midwifery profession. Consequently the remit is broad. The Taskforce will be able to look into, and provide recommended actions for, any aspect of workforce practice that supports the headline aim. Notwithstanding this broad remit, I am clear that the Taskforce will undertake its work with a distinctly practical focus, and it will look to generate

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evidence-based recommendations for action at pace. As such you will note that it is my intention for the Taskforce to meet frequently until such time as an agreed workplan is developed; the work of the Taskforce will dovetail with existing improvement activity to ensure that we achieve results as quickly as possible, with the maximum added value.

In the context of discussions with my officials, you have highlighted specifically that you would wish that the Taskforce expressly considers, *inter alia*:

- The distinct philosophy of the Midwifery profession and its value, including ensuring that midwives feel respected, psychologically safe, supported and confident to give the evidence based care that women and families need and want.
- Clear career opportunities, and progression across the four pillars of practice (Facilitating Learning, Leadership and Evidence, Research and Development), that are attractive, flexible, meet the needs of a predominantly female profession and support effective staff retention.
- A review of the recommendations emerging from the Midwifery workforce and education review, to address any issues, including barriers and obstacles to effective implementation.
- The creation of place-based opportunities for creating new pathways into pre-registration and the Maternity Care Assistant role, including transition to registration from those roles, with specific consideration being given to supporting the profession to reflect the diversity of the women and families receiving their care.
- Midwifery specific workforce tools to support the implementation of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 in partnership with the Royal Colleges and Trade Unions to ensure a suitable substantive workforce that delivers high quality care and reduces reliance on supplementary staffing. With consideration given to multidisciplinary tools.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your RCM colleagues for your positive and constructive engagement, as my officials have been undertaking the necessary preparatory work to establish the Taskforce. I am wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that NHS Scotland is an exemplary, progressive and inclusive place in which to build a career as a midwife, and I look forward to us working together constructively to realise this in partnership.



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