

Christine Grahame MSP
Convener
Health and Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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Dear Christine

I am writing to outline the approach for reform of the Scottish Health Council, following the independent review which reported in November 2008. This report, *Function and Form: An independent review of the Scottish Health Council*, recommended major reform of the Health Council, by revising its functions and creating an organisational structure that enables the functions to be carried out effectively.

The Health Council was subsequently asked to consider the report findings and recommendations and to develop an Action Plan, in partnership with NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, Scottish Government Health Directorates and other stakeholders. I have considered and will now approve the implementation of the enclosed Action Plan - *A Form fit to Function* – which is also available on the Health Council website at www.scottishhealthcouncil.org/shcp/1102.html

The revised functions of the Scottish Health Council, as described in the Action Plan, can be summarised as:

- Community Engagement and Improvement Support – providing proactive and tailored support for NHS Boards;
- Participation Review – review and evaluation of NHS Boards' approaches to participation;
- The Knowledge Network - a centre for exchange of knowledge, support, development and ideas.

In order to deliver these functions effectively, the Action Plan sets out a revised organisational structure, which will enable flexible working in expert teams, whilst maintaining the local office network to ensure the organisation's ability to obtain local feedback and input as part of its community engagement role.

The Scottish Health Council will formally consult with its staff on implementation of the Action Plan during the summer. It will also engage in dialogue with NHS Boards, Public Partnership Forums and other stakeholders on developing more detail around the revised functions later on in the year. The new functions and structure should be in place by December 2009, subject to the organisational change process.

Future governance arrangements will be considered in the context of the development of the Healthcare Improvement Scotland business model and the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Bill.

I hope this is informative and would be happy to discuss further.

NICOLA STURGEON