



Ms Shona Robison
Cabinet Secretary for Health
The Scottish Government

14th March 2018

Dear Ms Robison,

Request for update regarding the Rural Practice Short Life Working Group

I am writing on behalf of the RGPAS committee to enquire how plans are progressing to set up a Short Life Working Group on the new GP contract and rural practice.

We have heard various indications that the group has or is in the process of being set up. I note that Nicola Sturgeon advised Parliament on 25th January 2018 that: “Of course we must listen to the issues for rural GPs, which is why a short-life working group has been established to look specifically at those issues.” However, we have been advised informally by Scottish Government officials that in fact the group remains unformed, and that Terms of Reference have not yet been drawn up.

I hope that it has been clear in our correspondence to date that our members are concerned about the ramifications of the new GP contract on our rural communities. Furthermore, RGPAS and its members are well placed to contribute constructively to mechanisms – including the SLWG – to review and develop contractual considerations that might be more sustainable and relevant to the delivery of primary care in rural Scotland. Our contract response document ‘Looking at the Right Map’ contains numerous positive suggestions on how this might be achieved. Unfortunately, we have not received any correspondence from Scottish Government about the concerns raised and solutions proposed within this document.

We hope that the Scottish Government will actively consider how best to engage ‘front-line’ practising rural GPs in the SLWG and other aspects of implementation of the new contract. We hope that issues relating to travel to meetings, connectivity, and ensuring participation by experienced rural GPs will be considered and taken into account in the formation of the SLWG.

With kind regards,

Dr David Hogg
Chair - chair@ruralgp.scot

Cc RGPAS Members

Chair **Dr David Hogg** (Isle of Arran)
Vice Chair **Dr Alida MacGregor** (Tighnabruaich)
Secretary **Dr Susan Bowie** (Shetland)
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