



UNISON Scotland
14 West Campbell St
Glasgow
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10 October 2024

Dear Councillor

I am writing to you as a Scottish Green Party councillor to ask you to use your experience and influence within your party to encourage your MSP colleagues not to support the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill.

Without the support of the Scottish Greens this confused and damaging piece of legislation does not have majority support.

At the first stage of the Bill's parliamentary process, Green MSPs, bound by the Bute House Agreement voted for the bill to proceed. The Scottish Green Party is no longer bound by this agreement and therefore is under no obligation to support this roundly criticised measure which will undermine local accountability in care and local government as a whole.

The Scottish Greens have a history of supporting localism and local democracy – the aim of the Bill is to create a quango system where decisions are taken by appointees answering to the Minister rather than local communities.

The Bill as amended means the end of the present local lines of accountability from IJBs to the local authority and health board, but with the National Care Service Board reporting to COSLA and the NHS at a national level.

That the Bill aims at reducing the status of local government is made clear in the Scottish Government's own proposed amendments. Draft amendment Part 1 (3A) means the National Care Service Board will be established as a quango. However, elected local authorities are defined in the Bill as the "National Care Service" and local authority services as "NCS services". **In effect this means parts of local government will be redesignated as entities of a quango.**

Several other draft amendments diminish the status and autonomy of local government with further intended changes likely to add to this. **We are particularly concerned about draft amendment Part 1 5(12) 2014 Act – which gives Ministers a general power to add**

enactments, i.e. to extend without limit the range of functions that can be removed in future from local authority control, beyond those already listed in the Schedule to the Act. (This is also a key concern in relation to the future of NHS functions, given the impact of IJBs on NHS services – most UNISON NHS staff side reps on IJB Boards say integration has led to the outsourcing of NHS services.) The Bill also amends the 2014 Public Bodies (Joint Working) Act so that Ministers have the power to determine which services *must* be delegated instead of *may* be delegated.

Neither will the Bill resolve the many issues in care. **The creation of a National Care Service Board will not help to address the fundamental problems in our care system.** These are the combination of years of chronic underfunding and a deeply fragmented market model. The Bill as amended does not address these or the loss of public funding from the care system through reliance on for-profit providers. We fear this **unnecessary structural change will continue to divert focus and resources away from the main issues.**

We believe that this legislation will do harm not good. It will in fact hinder the development of the reforms we need, and a *real* National Care Service. We hope that the Scottish Greens will not want to be the party that makes possible the evisceration of local government and the commodification of social work and community health. We therefore urge you to impress upon your Party and in particular your parliamentary colleagues the importance of the Scottish Greens joining the many other organisations across Scottish public life calling time on this Bill.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss our ideas for creating [a real National Care Service for Scotland](#), one based on an expanded core of public provision, not-for-profit, free at the point of use, and coordinated locally by democratically elected councils.

Yours sincerely

Lilian Macer
Scottish Secretary
UNISON