

The Oversight Board  
c/o 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Charlotte House  
2 South Charlotte Street  
Edinburgh  
EH2 4AW

Ms Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport  
(Maree.Todd.msp@parliament.scot)

10 November 2023

Dear Ms Todd,

### Keeping the promise – homelessness and suicide prevention

I am writing to you as the Minister responsible for Mental Wellbeing and suicide prevention. I have written in similar terms to your colleague Paul McLennan MSP, Minister for Housing. I am writing on behalf of the [Oversight Board](#), following a discussion held at our meeting in October 2023.

You will know that the Oversight Board was established at the conclusion of the Independent Care Review to monitor Scotland's collective progress towards the vision that the promise is kept in full by 2030. We welcome the Scottish Government's continued commitment to keeping the promise, most recently demonstrated in the creation of the Cabinet Sub-committee for keeping the promise. The Oversight Board looks forward to hearing more about how the Sub-committee will provide the political leadership required to deliver systemic change across Scotland in the coming months and years.

In May 2022, the Oversight Board published [Report ONE](#) that highlighted homelessness and early death as devastating issues for the care community. In June 2023, we published [Report TWO](#), setting out our continued expectations and significant concerns around key themes: education; brothers and sisters; and homelessness.

Pages 42-43 of Report TWO highlight our concerns that the Scottish Government's Suicide Prevention Strategy for 2022-23 was silent on the issue of care experience. Scotland still does not do enough to understand the circumstances surrounding the tragic early death of those with care experience. We know good work is happening with the national hub to improve the collective understanding of early death. However, national strategies to prevent suicide must reflect the particular needs of care experienced people and we, along with many others, expect this to be part of the work over the next 12 months.

Similarly, pages 32 - 35 of Report TWO highlight our significant concerns in relation to homelessness in the care experienced community and, in particular, the Scottish Government's decision to 'temporarily pause' the prevention pathway for care leavers, young

people and veterans. We have made it clear that this decision must be reconsidered and the prevention pathway for care leavers reinstated. The preventative pathway for care leavers is

highlighted as a key action in the Scottish Government's, 'Keeping the Promise Implementation Plan' (Chapter 10 – Moving on From Care), and over the next 12 months it is imperative that the Scottish Government brings more focus to the work to end homelessness for care experienced young people.

The Oversight Board will continue to monitor progress across Scotland to keep the promise and will report again in 2024. With that in mind, it would be helpful if you could respond to our concerns about how the work in relation to homelessness and suicide prevention, as set out above, will be taken forward over the next 12 months. We would be grateful if you could respond in advance of our next meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2023, to help inform our approach to reporting in 2024. It is imperative that the needs and rights of care experienced young people are prioritised and resourced across government. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

*David Anderson*

David Anderson  
Co-Chair, on behalf of the Oversight Board.

Cc:

Elena Whitham, MSP, Minister for Drugs & Alcohol Policy  
Emma Roddick, MSP Minister for Equalities, Migration and Refugees  
Natalie Don, MSP, Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise  
Jenni Minto, MSP, Minister for Public Health and Woman's Health  
Joe Fitzpatrick, MSP, Minister for Local Government and Planning  
Siobhan Brown, MSP, Minister for Victims and Community Safety  
Patrick Harvie, MSP, Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights  
Graeme Dey, MSP, Minister for Higher and Further Education; and Minister for Veterans

Copied to Natalie Don MSP, Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise and members of the Ministerial Oversight Group on Homelessness: