



Fergus D Cochhrane
Clerk to the Committee
Public Petitions Committee
TG.01
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



Your ref: PE1105
5 November 2009

Dear Fergus

Thank you for your letter of 23 September 2009 regarding Petition PE1105 by Marjorie McCance on behalf of the St Margaret of Scotland Hospice, Clydebank.

The Scottish Government has previously stated that it would welcome any approach from the Scottish Hospices Forum and that it would be happy to meet with their representatives should they request to do so.

The Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee has recommended that NHS Boards need robust commissioning arrangements with their partners for the delivery of palliative care services to ensure they deliver value for money and that Scottish Government issues guidance to Boards on what should be included in their funding allocation to voluntary sector bodies, to supplement existing guidance (HDL 2003(18)).

Accordingly the Scottish Government asked the Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care to establish a short life working group to review the content of the current guidance and to make recommendations to the Scottish Government by December 2009. This would allow for consideration of these recommendations by the end of the current financial year.

I can confirm that this short life working group, under the chairmanship of Mr Robbie Pearson, Director of Planning and Performance, NHS Borders, who is co-chair of the Living and Dying Well Advisory Group and Chair of the Palliative Care Lead Officers Group, first met on 2 August 2009. A series of meetings are scheduled between now and the end of the year at which time the group will submit their recommendations. Membership of this group includes Mr Edward McGuigan, vice chair of St Margaret's.

In summing up, the Scottish Government remains committed to ensuring that specialist palliative and end of life care is available to anyone who needs it and will continue to work with the voluntary hospice movement and other key stakeholders to ensure that this objective is met.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Macleod

ANDREW MACLEOD