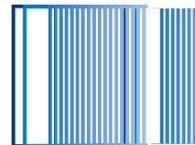


Chief Medical Officer and Public Health Directorate

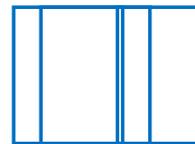
Chief Medical Officer and Deputy Chief Medical Officer

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NHS Board Chief Executives

C.c Directors of Public Health,
NHS Board Welfare Reform Leads



Your ref:
Our ref: «Ourref»
December 2013

Dear Colleague

Healthcare Impact of Welfare Benefit Reforms

As I am sure you will be aware, there is considerable concern about the impact on health of the UK Government's reforms to the welfare benefits system. There is emerging evidence of negative impacts on those who lose out under the reforms, being faced with reduced income at a time of rising food and fuel costs. In addition, a range of reputable organisations have issued warnings about the effect on wellbeing of fuel poverty, poor nutrition and increased stress.

I am copying to you the Outcome Focussed Plan that has been developed in consultation with NHS Boards, local government colleagues and third sector representatives. This identifies the actions and measures that NHS Boards should be undertaking to mitigate the worst of the negative effects of welfare reform. Most Boards are already taking steps to improve staff understanding of the consequences and the actions that can be taken, and all Boards have an identified lead for Welfare Reform.

I would ask you to ensure that your welfare reform leads are supported to implement the plan for your Board and that you ensure that appropriate collaboration occurs with local partners. I would also recommend that your Board has an opportunity to discuss the implications of benefit reform in your own area and the measures that you are putting in place to address these.

The Scottish Government will continue to work with colleagues across Scotland to continue to develop our understanding of the implications of welfare reform and the steps that can be taken to mitigate its effects. I would urge you to ensure that your Board makes use of the available resources, such as the attached logic model. A learning event on implementing the Outcome Focussed Plan is arranged for 6 March 2014. I would encourage all Boards to send a representative. Further details will be made available in due course.



Guidance for NHS Boards on mitigating actions has been prepared and published by the Scottish Public Health Network on behalf of the Scottish Directors of Public Health Group ([UK Welfare Reform: Final Guidance for NHS Boards](#)).

If you have any questions regarding this letter or the Outcome Focussed Plan please contact Roderick Duncan at roderick.duncan@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or tel. 0131 244 2818.

Yours faithfully,

Sir Harry Burns

Chief Medical Officer