

AG/501

8th January 2001

Mrs Jenny McNeill
Scottish Executive
Community Care Division
James Craig Walk
Edinburgh
EH1 3BA

Dear Jenny

REPORT OF THE JOINT FUTURE GROUP: "A JOINT FUTURE"

Many thanks for the opportunity to comment on the above document.

The very short period allowed for comments on the report means that it has not been possible for CCPS to consult fully with all its members; however members have asked me specifically to make the following key points.

- Members support the report's recommendation (at 7.4) that COSLA should develop guidance on charging policies to reduce the inconsistencies in home care charging. It is a matter of concern, however, that COSLA appears to be taking this forward without reference to anyone outside its own membership. Charging policies are of interest and concern to a wide range of stakeholders, and we would be extremely concerned if new guidance were to be developed and introduced without the involvement of all parties.
- Members were interested to read, at 6.3, the proposed recommendations in relation to human resource issues, in particular the proposal to agree a staffing framework and the possible alignment of varying terms and conditions. We note that these matters have been referred to the NHS Human Resources Directorate, which, in turn, is setting up a network group to take them forward. As the Executive will know, CCPS has conducted and published research on staff pay and conditions in the voluntary sector and we would hope that the network group will both take account of this research and invite the participation of the voluntary sector in taking matters forward. We would be grateful if you could let us have details of the relevant officials so that we can get in touch.
- Members appreciate that the remit of the JFG was, as noted at 1.9, 'principally about statutory agencies working together'. Nevertheless, many if not all of the recommendations in the report will have ramifications of one sort or another for the voluntary sector. It is a matter of very serious concern, therefore, that no voluntary sector input was invited or sought in relation to the work of the group.

Furthermore, as you are aware, not one single member of CCPS, nor its staff or Convener, was invited by the Executive directly to take part in the discussion seminars that took place in the autumn, although all relevant details were passed to the Executive on request. We would like to draw your attention to specific elements of the Scottish Compact*, as follows:

'The Government...will ensure that nominations are sought from voluntary sector interests as appropriate for public boards, agencies and collaborative working groups...'

‘The Government will...consult as appropriate in a flexible and open way communicating clearly and using appropriate media...’

‘The Government will...recognise the role which umbrella bodies have in representing the views of their constituents...’

‘The Government will...ensure that, in the process of policy making, the impact of changes in policy and procedure on the sector...are considered and taken fully into account...’

None of these commitments appear to have been respected in relation to the JFG. This is particularly puzzling, firstly because the importance of the sector’s contribution to community care is highlighted more than once in the report (for example, at 1.9); and that voluntary sector input has been invited and welcomed by the Executive in relation to other key areas of policy, notably the Aiming for Excellence Reference Group and the National Care Standards Committee.

We look forward to being involved in all future Executive initiatives in relation to community care.

Yours sincerely

ANNIE GUNNER

Development Co-ordinator

cc. Scottish Executive Voluntary Issues Unit

* The Scottish Compact: The principles underpinning the relationship between Government and the voluntary sector in Scotland, CM4083, The Scottish Office October 1998