December 2012

Dear Colleagues,

I write with regard to payment of the fee for membership of the new Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

As you know, the PVG Scheme is a new initiative designed to enhance the protection available in Scotland for children and vulnerable people. Anyone wishing to work with such groups must join the Scheme and this involves a one off payment of £59 to Disclosure Scotland.

I am aware that the issue of whether staff or employers will be responsible for payment of this fee has been a particularly difficult one for STAC to resolve and that my predecessor, Nicola Sturgeon, was approached for a view on the matter at the end of 2011. She acknowledged the Employers’ point that registration belongs to the individual and is transferrable and can therefore be seen as analogous to a professional registration fee, for which a staff member would be liable themselves. However, she was also conscious of the need to protect the lower paid and asked STAC to explore options where only those earning over £21,000 would pay their own registration fee.

This led to further discussions but, unfortunately, no agreement was reached and Staff Side have now sought a further view from me as the new Cabinet Secretary. There is no doubt that PVG registration is a transferrable benefit which, once acquired by a member of staff working for an NHS employer, can be used to facilitate employment with a different NHS employer, a local council or a private service provider. However, I acknowledge that the situation has moved on since 2011 and have listened carefully to the points being made around this issue. I am particularly conscious of the significant ongoing pressures hard working NHSScotland staff face on their take home pay. I would therefore like STAC to discuss putting in place a system where employers would cover PVG registration fees for all staff.

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www.scotland.gov.uk
I realise that this has been a difficult negotiating process and that both sides have put forward strong arguments in support of their positions. However, I hope that NHSScotland can now move forward to put in place the enhanced protection which the new PVG Scheme offers to children and vulnerable adults in Scotland.

ALEX NEIL