

PE1105/BB

Dear Frank,

You will recall the petition in the name of Marjorie McCance in relation to St Margaret's Hospice. I understand this may come up for discussion by the Petitions Committee at its next meeting which is due to take place in the Highlands. Unfortunately, due to Transport Committee commitments, I will not be able to travel to this meeting and I understand that Marjorie will also be unable to attend.

I request that this petition be kept open for a further period. There are two issues raised in it. One related to the decision by GG&C Health Board to withdraw funding for continuing care beds at the Hospice. Along with Ross Finnie, I met with the Cabinet Secretary for Health during the recess and she indicated that she would ensure that the Board met with us (and with Gil Paterson and Jackson Carlaw who were unavailable on the date in July) to seek to explain their approach. So far there is no indication of that follow-up meeting being arranged and we remain very dissatisfied, as I am sure will the petitioners.

The other element of the petition related to the funding arrangements for hospices which leave St Margaret's funded at only half the level of other hospices for its palliative care provision. The Cabinet Secretary indicated that a working group was discussing hospice funding and would report back by the end of the year. While I welcome this, clearly the petitioners will want to maintain their arguments so that any change in funding deals with the unequal distribution of funding.

Neither of the key issues raised by the petition is therefore resolved at the present time and I would ask that the petition be kept open meantime so that we can enlist the assistance of the petitions committee in making further progress on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

Des McNulty
MSP for Clydebank and Milngavie