







Given that the Scottish government is committed to pressing ahead with plans for an NCS, we will continue to engage to ensure that nursing issues are central to reform and the development of new approaches to social care. This is vital for ensuring that those using services receive care that is high quality, safe and appropriate for their needs.

But we are clear that individuals who require social care and community health services, and those who work in these sectors, cannot afford to wait until the creation of an NCS for the serious issues around workforce shortages and access to services to be addressed in a sustainable way.

RCN Scotland has been engaged in the Scottish government's co-design work throughout however we remain concerned about the extent to which this is meaningful. We called for and welcomed the creation of an Expert Legislative Advisory Group, however, this fell far short of our expectations and failed to make any meaningful impact on the Bill or draft amendments.

During initial parliamentary scrutiny, the Bill faced significant opposition. In particular, the proposals to create new local care boards and give Ministers power to transfer community health and social care functions away from local authorities and health boards, were widely opposed by local government and other organisations. In an effort to reach some consensus, in June 2023, the Scottish government entered an agreement with COSLA and NHS boards to amend those plans and instead share legal accountability for social work services, social care support and community health services through a new partnership arrangement.

In June, Ministers published amendments to the Bill setting out their updated proposals to reflect this shared accountability arrangement. Instead of creating new local care boards, IJBs will be renamed NCS local boards. Local authorities and NHS boards will retain responsibility for delivering their services and their associated staff and assets. Scottish Government, local government and NHS boards will work together to provide national level oversight through a new NCS Board.

The Bill remains a framework Bill, so many details of how this will work in practice are still unknown and will be left to secondary legislation and further co-design.

The plans continue to face serious uncertainty following a decision by COSLA to withdraw its support for the Bill and from the partnership agreement, in response to continued concerns about loss of local autonomy and control.

In our further evidence to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee we set out our views on the government's proposed amendments:





