

**Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister  
Health and Social Care Scotland Annual Conference  
Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow  
Friday 7 December 2018**

Thanks for that introduction.

I think all of us are waiting with bated breath to find out what a selfie sheet actually is. Jeane informs me she knows exactly what it is but she is not going to tell me.

You are in for a real treat having Ron Culley stand in for Loki today. I'm told Ron's rap routine is second to none. So my request is, please, somebody get that on video and share widely with the hashtag later on.

I am really delighted to be here today at this inaugural conference – it is a really important event but I think also a very special event. To look across this room and see so many people here today from, I understand, every single Integration Authority; people from Health Boards; from local authorities and from the third and independent sectors, it is really quite something and I want to thank all of you, obviously, for being here today. But I want to say right at the outset of my remarks – thanks to all of you for the incredible work that you are doing to make integration a reality.

I think that the turnout today undoubtedly underlines the significance of this event. Certainly, when I look back over my time doing Jeane's job as Health Secretary there is no doubt in my mind that starting the process that led to the integration of health and social care was one of the most important things that I oversaw as Health Secretary. And there is no doubt at all that helping all of you to implement integration is one of the most important things we are now doing as a government, and I know it is something that is very high up Jeane's priority list as well.

Of course this year, which is almost drawing to a close, is the year in which we celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NHS.

But it is also worth noting that this year marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Social Work Scotland Act – which established social work departments in every Local Authority, formalised financial assistance and grants for the third sector, and created the Children's Hearing System. And both of these anniversaries highlight, I think, how ambitious, far-seeing legislation can secure lasting and positive social change.

It is also now just four years since the Scottish Parliament passed the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act – which paved the way for integration. However, my hope is that in the years and decades ahead that Act will come to be seen in a similar light to those earlier Acts that established the NHS and social work.

It is, after all, the most significant reform to Scotland's healthcare system since the NHS was founded. It is one of the biggest changes to social work since the 1968 Act. And there is no doubt at all it is a necessary response to quite profound social change.

When the NHS was founded, life expectancy was much shorter than it is today. A separation back then between health and social care I guess made some sense – most health care was for acute services, and people who used acute services were usually different from the people and families who needed and relied upon social care.

That divide, of course, as all of you know better than anybody, no longer applies. Scotland – in common with other advanced economies – now has the very welcome, and I think it is important to stress that point, the very welcome, challenge of adapting to an ageing population. That means that more and more people have long-term conditions – and many people have more than one long-term condition.

Now, in these circumstances, people may sometimes require hospital treatment, but they can usually – with help – live at home or in a home-like setting.

In addition, ensuring that people are treated and supported at home – or in a home-like setting – is often the best way of preventing them from becoming overly institutionalised or dependent. And it is also what most people tell us what they want.

It's the way in which we can support people to be as well as they can be, rather than treating them for being ill.

But of course to achieve that, it is crucial that everybody works together – regardless of their employer. Whether you are a social worker, a GP, a community nurse, a hospital clinician, a home care worker, a physiotherapist or another professional – administrative boundaries cannot and must not get in the way of providing high quality care.

That's why, when we launched the initial consultation on integration, back in 2012, we highlighted that the reform would be essential if we were to improve the care we provided, particularly for older people across the country.

And we also made it clear then that – although in any reform it can be easy, sometimes too easy, to focus on administrative structures – our priority, when integrating services, had to be on the needs of individuals; on the needs of their carers and their family members; as well as the communities that they live in. The principle behind integration is a simple one – that the interests of the individual must always be at the centre and must come first.

It is of course now, it's quite hard to believe actually, six years since that consultation, four years since the Act was passed, and two years since integration came into force. However, I'm sure that if you've been immersed in integration throughout that period, as all of you have been, it will feel a lot longer than that – but actually, despite challenges, and I will touch on some of the challenges as I go through my remarks, I think it is important to note just how much progress has been made in a relatively short period of time. I want to pay tribute to you, and thank all of you and many colleagues for that.

Because much of that progress, indeed all of that progress, is due to the efforts of people in this room so thank you for that, in often challenging circumstances. It is so important because that has enabled you to improve the services that we provide for individuals across the country.

So it is thanks to your efforts that more people are now spending the end of their life at home, rather than in an institution – that's something that we know can make a real difference to people's sense of comfort and dignity towards the close of their lives. It can also make a huge difference to their loved ones.

Unscheduled bed days in hospital have fallen. And bed days lost to delayed discharge have fallen by 6% – from 527,000 in 2016–17, to 494,000 last year.

Now those statistics are a positive but even more important than the statistics is what they represent – if fewer people are receiving unscheduled care in a hospital bed, it suggests that more people are getting the care they need in the setting where they need it. It means that integration is beginning to bring practical benefits to the quality of life of thousands of people across the country.

All of that helps us to explain why – for all the scrutiny we rightly apply to the integration process here in Scotland – we are actually seen as a leader in both UK terms and international terms for the work that has already been done. So again just let me take the opportunity to emphasise my gratitude, Jeane's gratitude and the gratitude of the whole government to all of you.

But of course, with all that progress we know that we need to do more. We know there are no shortage of challenges facing you.

The Accounts Commission published a very useful report on integration just two weeks ago. It summarised well I think the areas where progress has been made, but also set out the further steps which need to be taken.

Those further steps include budgeting – for example ensuring that Integration Authorities have control over the hospital budgets that are set aside for unplanned admissions.

We know we still need to do more on data sharing and spreading good practice. And although there are some really good examples – very good examples of strategic planning of integration authorities ensuring that their plans match their strategic priorities, and that they work collaboratively to deliver those plans – it's something that the Accounts Commission highlighted as an area which still required further progress

And of course, the Commission also highlighted the fundamental importance of leadership.

The Scottish Government has supported the King's Fund to work with the Chief Officers of the Integration Authorities. However, we know that there is more we need to do to support everyone in the authorities to be leaders, as you drive integration forward.

After all, the jobs that you are doing are hugely important and – by definition – have not been done in this way before. So giving you the support you need we know is absolutely essential.

It's also worth noting in passing, and I won't dwell on this point as I don't want to lower the mood too much, that we face a further challenge right now being presented by the whole Brexit process that is underway. 13,000 EU citizens currently work in our health and social care sector. The UK Government has the power to unequivocally guarantee their rights– and I wish it would get on and use those powers and do exactly that.

Charging them, as the proposal stands at the moment, to secure rights they already enjoy is in my book is pretty outrageous. So is the idea of restricting rights to family reunion – and anything that is done to deter EU citizens from working here in Scotland will be deeply counter-productive, particularly in our health and social care setting.

That's why the Scottish Government is planning to meet the settled status fees for EU nationals working in our devolved public services. And it is of course one of many reasons why we will continue to oppose the current plans for Brexit.

Now, to take account of all of these ongoing challenges and requirements, the Government set, as you know, a wider review of integration in May of this year. The review group's recommendations will be presented both to Ministers and COSLA in the New Year.

I hope and expect to see both ambitious and very specific proposals for ensuring that the principles of integration – which we know command such widespread support – lead to improved outcomes for individuals and families across the country.

We have already seen one output from the review group, which is the joint statement produced by COSLA, NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government in September.

That statement reaffirmed our shared responsibility for integration, and acknowledged a collective need to step up the pace in implementing it. It demonstrated that all of us see integration as an important, necessary and permanent change to how we deliver services. And hopefully, it also sent a clear message that we will support integration authorities and their partners as you make integration work.

And of course in doing that, it is so important that we discuss what is happening on the ground, and we learn lessons from what is happening on the ground. That is why the foundation of Health and Social Care Scotland is so welcome and so very important.

By bringing together Chief Officers and others working in health and social care from across the country I truly believe that, this organisation can make a big difference, and very positive difference, to how information is shared, and to the quality of

leadership within the sector. You can play a huge part in making sure integration is a success, which all of us want it to be.

And that is something if we achieve that, and I think all of us in the room are determined that we will, it is something that will bring huge benefits to every single community, every family, and in fact in time to virtually every person living across our country.

I began today of course by reflecting on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NHS, and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Social Work Scotland Act.

The success of these pieces of legislation we must remember was not automatic. It's easy given the distance that has passed to look back and assume that was all easy and that these pieces of legislation led to overnight change – that was not the case – and the scale of the success of these pieces of legislation was not immediate. The reason we look at these acts so fondly now, is because we can see, and can see every single day, that they made a major and positive change to the lives of millions of people.

So our hope, our expectation and our determination, must be that in 50 years' time a future First Minister will be standing here looking back on the legislation that integrated health and social care, and reflecting in the same way on the positive change it delivered for countless lives across the country, that they will see integration, as something that genuinely made a difference.

That's why, as I said at the start, helping all of you to implement integration is one of the most important things the Scottish Government can do. We are hugely grateful for everything you have already achieved but we know the challenges you face in doing that and the challenges you continue to face, which is why we look forward to working with you and supporting you in the months and years ahead.

For all of these reasons, I am really delighted to have had the opportunity to join you here this morning.

I hope that today's event is a huge success and I hope that Health and Social Care Scotland becomes an effective and influential organisation, and have no doubt that it will do so. And I hope that together, we continue to build on the progress we have already made. Because if we do that, then we will undoubtedly provide better services for individuals, their families and communities the length and breadth of Scotland and that's a pretty special prize to aim for. So enjoy the day and thank you very much for all that you do and I look forward to hearing the outcome of the conference.

Thank you.