

RG/RW/C14

Ms Nicola Sturgeon MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Health & Wellbeing  
Scottish Executive  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DH

28 February 2008

Dear Nicola

**Highland Community Care Forum and Age Concern Highland**

In answer to my question today in Parliament, you said you would look at the particular circumstances surrounding Highland Community Care Forum and Age Concern Highland for which I am grateful.

Age Concern provides advocacy and direct services to older people in Highland. Given the remote geography of the area, older people are often isolated and the service provided gives them a lifeline.

Highland Community Care Forum runs many projects for which they draw down other funds. However, cutting their core funding means that all these services will disappear – they are involved in providing advocacy and information for carers, including young carers. They also support the Highland Users Group. The council have indicated that they will continue to fund HUG, but the group is clear that because of the health problems of its officers, it will have difficulty in surviving without the support of HCCF.

Carers in Highland are facing difficulties given that support for those with learning difficulties is being cut as is respite care. Again, many of those people are isolated and often do not get the help and support they are entitled to because of the difficulty in recruiting and retaining those who would deliver these services.

**Rhoda Grant**  
**Member of the Scottish Parliament for the Highlands & Islands**  
Please reply to:

Room M1.06, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP  
Tel. (0131) 348 5766  
Fax. (0131) 348 5767

E-mail: [Rhoda.Grant.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:Rhoda.Grant.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)  
Web: [www.rhodagrants.org.uk](http://www.rhodagrants.org.uk)

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Cabinet Secretary for Health & Wellbeing

If these two organisations disappear, vulnerable people will reach crisis point requiring more expensive intervention.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rhoda Grant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rhoda Grant MSP  
**Highlands & Islands**

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Room M1.06, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP  
Tel. (0131) 348 5766  
Fax. (0131) 348 5767

E-mail: [Rhoda.Grant.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:Rhoda.Grant.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)  
Web: [www.rhodagrants.org.uk](http://www.rhodagrants.org.uk)