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26 June 2018

Dear Angela

Thank you for your letter of 26th June indicating your resignation as a Scottish Government Minister.

You first joined the government as Youth Employment Minister, in the midst of high levels of youth unemployment - at the time the only Minister in the UK with such a job title. The groundwork you laid – and your relentless focus on this issue – helped us reduce those levels to among the lowest in the EU and to the point where we recently met our target to reduce youth unemployment by 40% four years early.

I believe that tackling the youth unemployment problem has been one of the biggest successes of this government and thank you for the role you played in bringing this about.

As Cabinet Secretary over the last four years, you have worked tirelessly to give a voice at the Cabinet table to those who are not always heard in society – and the fact Scotland has received international recognition for the work we have done to support refugees, on LGBTI+ rights, on women's issues and many other areas is in no small part down to your leadership.

In the face of a UK Government which is inflicting a decade of austerity on the people of Scotland, as well as the most brutal welfare cuts in living memory, you have helped ensure that the human cost of such misguided policies is never forgotten and that people always come first. This has been done through laying the foundations for a more just and dignified system using newly-devolved powers and of course through the work you have done on poverty and tackling inequalities. As you say, this is an issue that has always been close to you heart and the work you have done to take us to a position of ending child poverty will continue.

As you leave government, I would like to offer you my sincerest thanks for the immense contribution you have made in delivering a fairer, more progressive Scotland.

With my thanks + best wishes
Nicola

NICOLA STURGEON