Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister of Scotland

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Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Dear Shona

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

During your eleven years in government, you have served with distinction in the administrations of both Alex Salmond and myself in a variety of roles.

Your period as Health Secretary coincided with a time of unprecedented pressure on our NHS, with more people being treated than ever before. Despite this, you ensured that we continue to see high levels of patient satisfaction and the lowest A&E waiting times in the UK for over 3 years.

The programme of reforms you have begun will be a foundation on which our health and social care services are built for the future.

It is to your immense credit that the integration of Health and Social Care – which is the biggest reform of healthcare in this country since the NHS was established – has been implemented so successfully.

I am pleased that one of your last acts as Health Secretary was to offer a significant pay rise for our hardworking NHS staff, which I believe is a fitting tribute to the way in which you have unceasingly spoken up for them in government over the last four years.

You also played a key role in the successful organisation and delivery of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and as a Glasgow MSP I am very aware of the lasting positive legacy that this event has left on our city.

I know that recent years have brought a number of personal challenges for you, including the loss of both your parents and health worries of your own, among other issues. Despite this, you continued to serve the people of Scotland with dedication, just as you did your loved ones. I am delighted to wish you every happiness in your new relationship.

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I would like to thank you for all your hard work in government. Our friendship has always been extremely important to me and while we may no longer sit together around the cabinet table I know that I will continue to seek your counsel as a colleague and a friend. The people of Dundee East can be assured that in you they have one of our nation's finest elected representatives.

With my thanks + best wishes

Nicola

NICOLA STURGEON

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