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First Minister
St Andrew's House

26 June 2018

Dear Nicola

I write to offer my resignation as Minister in the Scottish Government.

It has been an honour to serve in the Scottish Government over the last ten years. Scotland's NHS is one of our most treasured national institutions and it has been an immense privilege to serve as Health Secretary over the last the last three and a half years, albeit at times very challenging and all consuming.

We should be very proud of the staff who work in our health and care services, they do a tremendous job day in and day out and I thank them personally for their efforts. I have had the pleasure of meeting so many fantastic and inspiring people over my time in the role, our NHS staff are truly the beating heart of the service. As I leave office, I am personally delighted to have been able to offer them a pay rise of at least 9% over the next 3 years.

I wish my successor all the very best in this very challenging role. Our NHS of course faces the pressures that health services across the western world are facing. Our twin approach of delivering investment and reform will help ensure our NHS ensures well beyond its 70th birthday. In recent years we've delivered a new GP contract; expanded healthcare training places; taken forward the integration of health and social care; delivered the real living wage to adult social care staff; and started the journey to ensure that mental health services are treated with parity of esteem alongside physical conditions. These reforms now begun will go a long way in ensuring they are ready to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Although, I am perhaps most proud to have been the Cabinet Secretary to see our long fought for Minimum Unit Pricing legislation come into force.

As you know this last year has been particularly challenging for me personally, losing both my parents, having a health scare of my own, and some big changes in my personal life. I thank you for your support during these difficult times.

I feel that I have reached a point in my life just now where I would be best to step down from a role in Government. I have entered a new chapter of my life, including a new relationship, where it would be good to take time to focus on those closest to me, who have too often had to come second place to my job, which has been hard for us all.

I am proud to serve the people of Dundee East and I look forward to continuing to represent them in the Scottish Parliament.

I wish you and your new ministerial team all the best in continuing to deliver the best possible services to the Scottish people - as we continue to set out our clear belief that Scotland's future is an independent one, within the European family of nations..

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shona', followed by a small comma.