



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Michael Matheson MSP
Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care
NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care
Scottish Government, St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

We write to you as Lothians MSPs who are growing increasingly concerned about the future of sight loss related healthcare provision in Edinburgh and the Lothians and ask that you set out a clear timetable for the building of the new Edinburgh Eye Hospital.

As you will be aware the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion was declared not fit for purpose in 2014, at which point a project of work was undertaken that made the strong recommendation that a new purpose-built hospital was constructed at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh at Little France. This was seen as the best use of money as well as representing the best outcome for patients as compared to a number of other explored options.

Despite this recommendation, a decision was then made that capital funding would not be used to build a new Eye Hospital, but instead there would be investment to refurbish the existing Edinburgh Eye Pavilion. This represented the worst case scenario in the report attached to our letter, for both value for money and patient care.

We therefore welcomed the decision prior to the last Scottish Election, where the previous First Minister once again committed to a brand new Eye Hospital here in Edinburgh. Whilst the commitment was delayed, the timetable of a new Eye Pavilion opening in 2024 provided clarity to patients about the future of sight loss related care in Edinburgh, the Lothians and further afield.

However, despite numerous promises and reassurances, it became increasingly clear that the new Eye Pavilion would not be operational in 2024 and instead it now looks likely that it will not happen until 2027 at the earliest.

It is nearly 10 years since the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion was declared not fit for purpose, and in those 10 years patients have had to receive care in a building which the Scottish Government acknowledges fails to meet the standard expected of our world class NHS.

We understand the pressure on public sector finances and that inflation has made costs rise, but further delays will cause additional anger, frustration and desperation for patients and our constituents.

Therefore, we are requesting that you:

1. Set out the clear criteria that will be applied when capital funding is allocated so that patients have a clear understanding of how the process works;
2. Outline the timescale for the acquisition of land at Little France, the building timetable and projected operational opening of the New Edinburgh Eye Pavilion;
3. Provide a clear plan for how you will work with NHS Lothian to ensure that the care provided at the Edinburgh Eye Pavilion is meeting the standards that is expected in spite of the building not currently being fit for purpose; and



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4. Commit to communicating and consulting with patients, visual impairment charities, and elected members from across the region on the New Edinburgh Eye Pavilion in order to achieve the best outcomes possible for the people of Edinburgh and the Lothians.

We hope that you recognise the strength of feeling felt by all our constituents that committing to building a new Edinburgh Eye Pavilion is necessary.

We look forward to hearing from you and working with you to deliver for the people of Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Boyack
Member of Scottish Parliament for Lothian
Region (Scottish Labour)

Sue Webber
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian
Region (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)

Daniel Johnson
Member of the Scottish Parliament for
Edinburgh Southern Constituency (Scottish
Labour)

Foysoil Choudhury
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian
Region (Scottish Labour)

Miles Briggs
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian
Region (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)

Jeremy Balfour
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian
Region (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)

Ben Macpherson
Member of the Scottish parliament for
Edinburgh Northern and Leith (Scottish
National Party)

Alex Cole-Hamilton
Member of the Scottish Parliament for
Edinburgh Western (Scottish Liberal
Democrats)

Ash Regan
Member of the Scottish Parliament for
Edinburgh Eastern (Alba Party)