

# Eljamel victim: 'Yousaf meeting pleasant but came to no conclusions'

JUSTIN BOWIE

**A** Fife protester who met Humza Yousaf after heckling him insisted he must now act on her demands for a public inquiry into the Eljamel surgery scandal.

Glenrothes grandmother Theresa Mallett welcomed Mr Yousaf into her home nine days after confronting him during his SNP independence convention speech in Dundee.

Even though Theresa told us the meeting was "pleasant", victims of rogue surgeon Sam Eljamel remain frustrated at the government's refusal to grant a full public probe.

The disgraced medic repeatedly botched operations while he was employed by NHS Tayside between 1995 and 2013.

Campaigners question why he was able to get away with harming patients for so long before he was later suspended and dismissed.

In her dramatic intervention at Caird Hall, longtime nationalist Theresa, 61, told Mr Yousaf she was quitting the SNP in anger.

After meeting him on Monday, she told us: "Hearing's one thing, but listening is another thing."

"The meeting was cordial and pleasant enough.

"But we didn't come to any conclusions about anything.

"They haven't come up with anything that would go near a public inquiry.

"They want to fix it, but only in their way. Now it's our chance, and we'll do it our way."

More than 100 patients claim they were harmed by Eljamel and leading campaigners have been demanding a public inquiry for years.

Theresa said she was only able to get her voice heard due to being a member of Mr Yousaf's party.

She told us: "If I hadn't



been an SNP member, I would never have been heard."

Theresa also claims she found out only on Monday she had not been contacted during an NHS Tayside review into spinal patients.

The Fife gran was operated on for sciatica in 2012 by Eljamel, but has lived in constant pain ever since.

In June, whistleblowers claimed NHS Tayside bosses knew about concerns over the medic as early as 2009, four years before his suspension.

Health board chiefs have insisted alarm bells were raised only in 2013.

But documents show senior managers within NHS Tayside blamed junior staff for Eljamel's poor performance.

Theresa was joined at her meeting with Mr Yousaf by Alan Ogilvie, another former patient of Eljamel.

Mr Ogilvie, now based in London, said there is a fundamental lack of trust between victims and NHS Tayside.

The health board has urged patients with concerns to contact them.

Mr Ogilvie told us: "Patients are reluctant to speak to the liaison team. They are worried about what NHS Tayside wants

**PAINFUL PROTEST: A victim of the disgraced surgeon Sam Eljamel, Theresa Mallett, above, heckled First Minister Humza Yousaf at the independence convention in Caird Hall last month, inset. She is fighting for a public inquiry for all the victims.**

to do with that information."

A Scottish Government spokesperson said on Monday: "The first minister was happy to meet Theresa Mallett and welcomed the opportunity to listen to her experience.

"We are considering what the best next steps would be, including an independent commission.

"We will be following up the meeting with a range of actions, including an update on the process that will be put in place to review the concerns former patients have."

NHS Tayside was approached for comment.