

Conversation

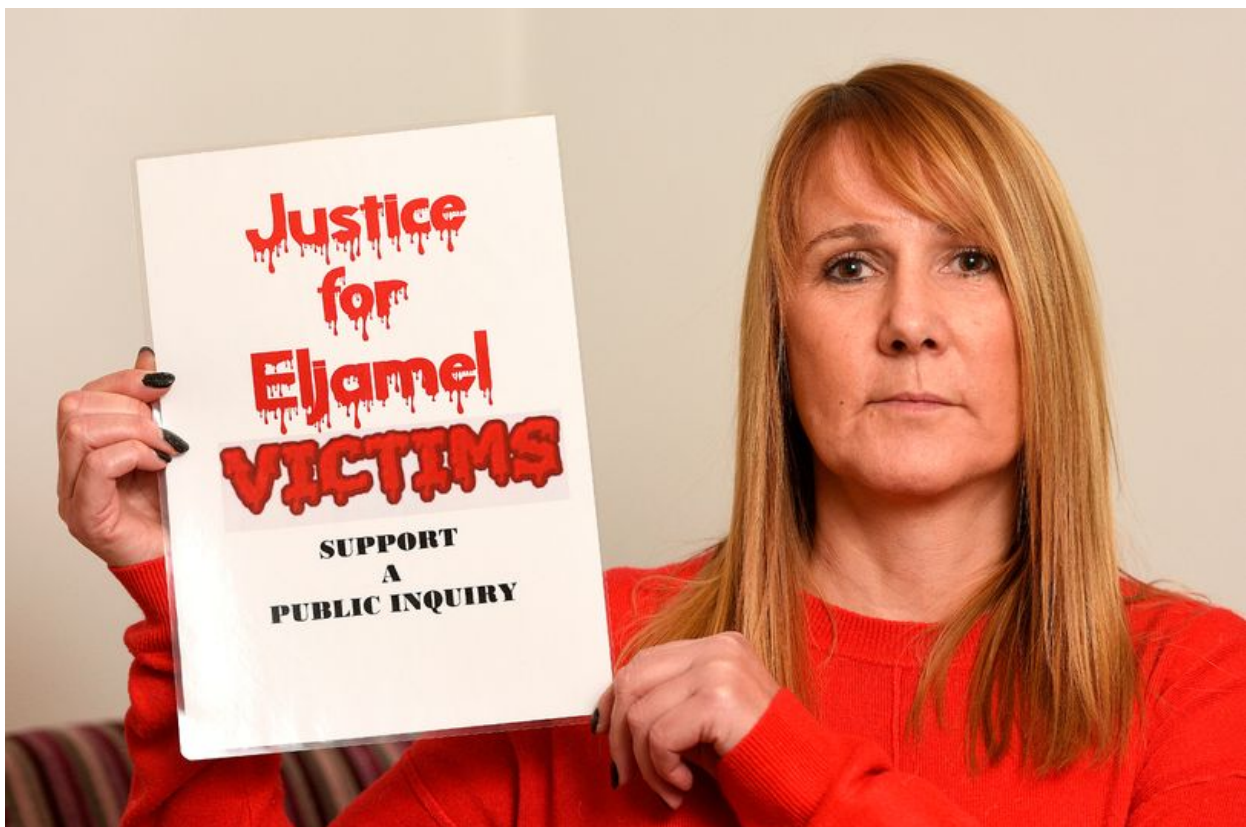
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News

'Untrustworthy' Humza Yousaf called out as Michael Matheson 'refuses' Eljamel public inquiry plea

The Scottish Government has been urged to start a public inquiry into why the shamed surgeon was able to operate at NHS Tayside for so long

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Jules Rose is demanding a full public inquiry (Image: Daily Record)

[Humza Yousaf](#) and [Michael Matheson](#) have been branded 'untrustworthy' after the health secretary appeared to rule out a public inquiry into shamed surgeon Professor Sam Eljamel. Over 100 victims of the doctor are demanding answers as to how he was able to get away with botched surgeries at Ninewells Hospital in [Dundee](#) for so long.

Dr Eljamel is thought to have harmed hundreds of patients while employed at [NHS Tayside](#). Campaigners say no one at the health board has been held to account for the actions of Eljamel, which happened over a number of years.

Last month, the first minister refused to rule out a public inquiry a position he was said to have reiterated at a meeting with Theresa Mallett, 61, who was left with life-changing injuries after undergoing botched surgery for sciatica. However, just days later, another campaigner, Jules Rose, was told by Mr Matheson that the government wanted to go in a different direction.

Ms Rose, 55, who had a tear duct removed by Eljamel instead of a brain tumour, accused the [Scottish Government](#) of paying "lip service" to victims. She met with Mr Matheson earlier this month to demand a public inquiry but in a follow-up letter, the health secretary said he would instead "commission a senior legal professor" to consider concerns about the Eljamel case.

He claimed this would "include the links between individual patients' experiences, the clinical professional and related corporate governance processes within NHS Tayside and other organisations involved". It would also look at the "wider learning" from the scandal.

Ms Rose, from Kinross, says this falls short of the public inquiry she and other survivors want. She posted the letter on Twitter and said: "Lies, deflection, lies, deflection and more lies! Yousaf is caught out telling porkies again!"



NHS Tayside says concerns about Professor Sam Eljamel were first raised in 2013 although this has been disputed by some who say it was actually four years earlier

Explaining her position to the Scottish Express, the teaching assistant said the government was "actually playing into our hands" as "every time they say something, they trip themselves up" which shows "how much they can't be trusted".

She said Mr Matheson had lost control of the situation and said a public inquiry would allow repeated patterns of failure to be detected within NHS Tayside. Ms Rose also pointed out she and another victim Pat Kelly had already given their stories 13 months ago but that had not led to any outcomes or recommendations.

She added: "We are happy to wait several years, as long as it takes. Patients have already been waiting 15 years so another five or so is not going to matter. It is a deflection tactic.

"This isn't about Eljamel anymore. If you listen to Humza Yousaf, he keeps coming back to Eljamel. But this is about accountability for the health board."



Michael Matheson and Humza Yousaf (Image: Getty)

Ms Rose was talking on the same day Ms Mallett, from Glenrothes, opened up about her confronting Mr Yousaf at a recent SNP convention. The independence supporter created headlines when she challenged the first minister for his government's failures to act.

Speaking to [The Guardian](#), she said: "I was listening to Humza and he came out with something like 'every person in Scotland counts'. I felt enraged and I just started shouting at him. Eleven years of trauma and pain, getting no answers, gaslit by doctors – that all came out.

"Where my voice came from, I don't know. I'm usually easygoing. But I was glad I got it out."

The [Scottish Tories](#) used the final FMQs of the [Holyrood](#) session to call for a public inquiry last month. Scottish Conservative MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife Liz Smith said Ms Rose's reaction to Mr

Matheson's letter "leaves no room for doubt about the anger that Sam Eljamel's patients rightly feel about their treatment".

She added: "The suffering that they endured because of his disgraceful actions has been compounded by deflection and prevarication from the SNP government. Humza Yousaf and Michael Matheson must stop their evasion and give Eljamel's patients what they want and deserve, which is a public inquiry into this appalling scandal."

A Scottish Government spokesman said: "The First Minister was happy to meet one of the former patients affected last week, and welcomed the opportunity to listen to her experience of treatment by Professor Eljamel. Our deepest sympathies go out to all Professor Eljamel's patients for the ordeal they have suffered. During last week's meeting the First Minister outlined that the Scottish Government has committed to establishing an independent commission that could engage directly with former patients, and we will provide details of the practical arrangements for former patients as soon as these are agreed."