

Patients of butcher surgeon Sam Eljamel 'will be heard' as inquiry chairman announced

: 29/02/2024

Lord Weir will head up the inquiry into neurosurgeon Sam Eljamel and NHS Tayside

More than 170 patients are believed to have been harmed by head of neurosurgery at NHS Tayside, Sam Eljamel

The Scottish Government promised the patients would be “at the heart” of the Eljamel Inquiry as they announced its chairman.

Brain butcher Professor [Sam Eljamel](#) is accused of harming at least 172 patients during his tenure as head of neurosurgery at NHS Tayside.

Patients have been fighting for a public inquiry into the actions of him and the NHS Tayside board who allowed him to continue operating despite many complaints.

The Daily Record has told numerous stories about victims who were harmed but dismissed out of hand when they tried to complain about his actions.

Former Health Secretary Michael Matheson announced last year there would be an inquiry and also a clinical review into the cases of all patients who feel they may have been harmed.

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And yesterday new Health Secretary Neil Gray announced Lord Weir will chair the public inquiry and Professor Stephen Wigmore, Regius Chair of Clinical Surgery and Head of the Department of Surgery at Edinburgh University, will chair the Independent Clinical Reviews.

The clinical reviews will begin in April.

In making the announcement, just a week after he met campaigners outside the Scottish Parliament, he promised patients would be at the heart of the process.

He said: “There will be consultation with patients and their representatives to ensure the right focus and scrutiny is given to the right issues.

He said: "There will be consultation with patients and their representatives to ensure the right focus and scrutiny is given to the right issues.

"The experiences shared with me by these brave individuals are truly shocking and I would like to put on record my regret, my sorrow, that their search for answers has taken quite so long."

He said the patients and their legal team will be consulted on the terms of reference of the public inquiry and the clinical reviews.

Last night lead campaigner on the Patient Action Group Jules Rose, who had a tear duct rather than a brain tumour removed by Eljamel, said: "I'm glad that the next steps have been announced but it's been like getting blood from a stone.

"We've had to shame the Scottish Government to get some, any, movement. These delays are unacceptable – harmed patients and their families need support and answers now. Some have waited over 10 years.

"The group and I, along with our legal representation, will be scrutinising the announcements.

"They must not be allowed to continue marking their own homework.

"We were told by the Scottish Government that the individual clinical reviews were to be established quickly and separately to a Public Inquiry so as not to delay – but we've seen a longer delay to that process than the Public Inquiry Chair announcement today.

"The Public Inquiry is necessary, not only for our patients, but also for the public – we've exposed how poor governance allowed this to happen, we've exposed malpractices, and we've shown how these things can continue to happen."

But she said: "Let's also get on with the individual clinical review processes and stop dithering about whilst we slowly die out."

And she added: "The public inquiry and clinical review is only 50% of it. It is imperative that NHS Tayside and Eljamel are held criminally responsible as well for the sake of justice."

Elizabeth Rose, Founding Director of LM Medilaw who represent the majority of affected patients said it was "a significant day in what has been a very long and painful journey to date for all the patients we represent".

She continued: "We welcome the appointment of Lord Weir and look forward to working with him to find answers and justice for our clients.