

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

29th February 2024 @ 1430

Today the Scottish Government finally announced Lord Weir as Chair for the Public Inquiry into Eljamel and NHS Tayside. They also announced Professor Stephen Wigmore as the Chair for the even longer awaited individual clinical review for patients, which we have now been assured will begin by April.

This Patients' Action Group shall be examining both appointments and immediately asking for next steps to delay no further the harm that patients continue to endure due to delays in getting them help and answers, but also making Scottish Hospitals safer for patients.

We welcome the announcement of both chairs and the assurance given by Neil Gray, the Health Secretary, that the patients and our legal representatives are to be given input to the Terms of Reference for the Public Inquiry. This will allow us to be able to assist the public inquiry to cover, comprehensively, the issues that are of concern to patients. These issues have arisen from the failures of a healthcare system that led to malpractice, and the Terms of Reference an opportunity to safeguard the care of every other patient in NHS Scotland going forward.

Jules Rose, lead patient in our Campaign group, 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. Both recent revelations about their definition of 'independence' of those involved in establishing these processes, and historical failures at doing truly 'independent' reports, makes us understandably cynical regarding their decisions. 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. Many of the victims are living with significant adverse health.

"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. The Public Inquiry is also going to help safeguard the care of every other patient in NHS Scotland going forward. I have been assured by Neil Gray that the Public Inquiry's Terms of Reference will be developed with our input.

"We all want the answers that the Public Inquiry will surface, but let's also get on with the individual clinical review processes and stop dithering about whilst we slowly die out."

As usual, we always believe that ...

- to achieve transparent, unbiased, and honest answers.
- to have essential learning and enact real change.
- to hold to account those responsible.
- to help and support those patients living with what happened.
- to rebuild public trust in our healthcare organisations, to care for them, even now.

...is by having a thorough and independent **Public Inquiry**.

**We must get to the truth as soon as possible,
to safeguard all patients who rely on healthcare in Scotland.**

We are demanding a Public Inquiry *that accomplishes these goals*. We will not give up.

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