

PE1446/T

The Quality Unit

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**The Scottish
Government**
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Mr Andrew Howlett
Assistant Clerk
Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EH99 1SP

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Your ref: PE1446

5 December 2014

Dear Mr Howlett

Thank you for your letter of 31 October, on behalf of the Public Petitions Committee, in relation to petition PE1446, from Dr Liza Morton on the care of congenital heart disease patients.

In our letter of 21 February 2014, we stated that our expectation was for the work to develop standards suitable for Scottish circumstances to be completed within 12 months. The Committee has asked for an update on progress and reassurance that this timescale will be met.

As the Committee is aware, the Adult Standards Group has agreed to be guided by the principle that Scotland should adopt the English standards unless there is good reason not to, taking into account the need to allow for the specific needs of the service in Scotland and the Scottish ACHD patient population. For example, the service in Scotland will never meet the English standards on staffing numbers, particularly cardiologists and surgeons, because we will not have a volume of patients sufficient to maintain the skills and work plans of a higher number of specialists in line with England.

The service in Scotland must be developed to meet the needs of our Scottish population and balance the need to deliver outreach clinics with ensuring that interventional cardiologists and surgeons are able to treat a sufficient number of patients to be able to maintain their skills.

The Scottish Congenital Cardiac Network (SCCN) continues to make good progress considerable progress with developing standards of care for Scotland. This work has been based on the latest draft of the revised standards from the New Congenital Cardiac Review in England and Wales.

NHS England is in the process of consulting on the draft standards and the consultation will close on the 3 December. The SCCN and National Services Division (NSD) are responding to the consultation. Once England has published the final standards, SCCN will consult on their applicability for Scotland.

Scotland's Standards Group has agreed to meet regularly to support this work and NSD has advised that it expects the work to develop standards suitable for Scottish circumstances to be completed within 12 months from the English standards being published.

The timescales in England have slightly delayed the work in Scotland but NSD has advised that a delay of few months is more than justified by having standards for Scotland that are based on the best evidence available in the world on the delivery of congenital cardiac care.

I hope that this reply, the terms of which have been cleared by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Craig Bell
National Planning Manager