

NHS Forth Valley

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

Date 3rd July 2014
Your Ref:
Our Ref: 729
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Dear Mr Howlett,

I write in response to your letter dated 5th June 2014 regarding Petition PE1517 on Polypropylene Mesh Medical Devices.

The Board considers that the evidence around vaginal mesh operations and sub-urethral tape procedures is very different and that they should not be confused. Vaginal mesh surgery has an unacceptable risk of complications and has been discredited. A number of such operations were carried out in Forth Valley but such operations were discontinued locally in 2011.

There is a strong evidence base which suggests that tape surgery is safe and effective and over 300 operations have been performed in Forth Valley since 2011 with a very low complication rate. Full information has been shared with patients before informed consent is given.

It is noted that media stories have raised further concerns amongst the public as regards sub-urethral tape procedures and it is important that this is taken seriously. As advised by the CMO, local consultants have had further detailed discussion of the risks with patients already listed for surgery to allow reconsideration and a small number of operations have proceeded following such detailed discussion.

After further discussion with lead clinicians, the Board has now decided to pause such surgery pending a detailed local review. This will include following up all patients who have had such surgery in the last three years to provide further reassurance as to the safety and success of the procedures. It is hoped that if the findings are completely reassuring, this will allow eventual resumption of tape surgery which has brought great benefit and relief of distressing symptoms to many patients.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Jane Grant
Chief Executive

Chairman: Alex Linkston CBE
Chief Executive: Jane Grant

*Forth Valley NHS Board is the common name for Forth Valley Health Board
Registered Office: Carseview House, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4SW*

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