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Lewis Macdonald MSP
Convener, Health and Sport Committee

By Email

25th January 2021

Dear Lewis

I'm writing to provide the Health and Sport Committee with an update on the Scottish Trauma Network.

With the continued ongoing investment from the Scottish Government, the Scottish Trauma Network continues to develop at pace to its phased implementation plan. The Network's three most high-profile milestones thus far have been the Major Trauma Centre opening in Aberdeen (1 October 2018), closely followed by the MTC in Dundee (19 Nov 2018), and the new ScotSTAR North base at Aberdeen Airport (24 July 2019).

Throughout the pandemic the trauma regions have continued to provide high quality care to those through the various established trauma pathways. The regions have seen a steady number of trauma cases with variance in the types of cases e.g. more falls from heights than road traffic accidents. This has put additional pressure on the network with many regions deploying trauma staff elsewhere to provide critical support in our response to COVID-19.

The committee will be aware, both Major Trauma Centres (MTCs) in the West and South East have yet to be officially opened. While both the West and South East continue to treat and care for trauma patients through existing pathways, the expectation was that all 4 MTCs would be officially live and supported by the Trauma Triage Tool by the end of 2020/21. However, due to the ongoing pressures faced by the regions from the current pandemic I'd like to update the committee on delays to those openings.

The Scottish Trauma Network agreed a set of minimum standards that must be in place for Major Trauma Centres to open, one of those key standards is a Major Trauma Ward. Currently in both the West and South East the planned ward space for the Major Trauma Wards are currently being utilised for the treatment and assessment of COVID-19 patients to alleviate pressures from other parts of the hospital. While both areas can be reverted back

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to their original purpose, it would be retracting critical COVID-19 capacity and as a result applying further pressures to other parts of the service.

Additionally, the Trauma Triage Tool which provides plays a critical role in supporting the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) in determining which location to send a trauma patient to depending on the level of trauma is currently not live in the West and South East. As was the case with the North and East MTCs, the tool goes live when the Centre is officially opened with an operational Major Trauma Ward. Both the Trauma Wards and Triage tool are dependent on each other and turning on the tool without the wards in place could lead to further pressures on hospitals capacity.

In light of this, I have agreed with both the West and South East Regions to delay the opening of their Major Trauma Centres until later in the year.

I'd like to assure the committee, that delaying the official opening of both Major Trauma Centres will not impact of the level of care provided to trauma patients. Patients continue to receive high quality, safe and effective care across Scotland regardless of these delays. Both the West and South East have trauma pathways in place which are already benefitting trauma patients.

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