



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Jeane Freeman MSP

Cabinet Secretary Health and
Sport

Via email only

Health and Sport Committee
T3.40

The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5410

Calls via RNID Typetalk: 18001 0131 348 5224

Email: healthandsport@parliament.scot

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Dear Jeane

Health and Sport Committee budget inquiry

Thank you for your response of 12 May 2020 to my letter of 23 April in relation to the 20-21 budget. While recognising your opening comments about returning to issues once the wider COVID-19 position and its impact on budgets becomes clearer there are 2 areas I would like to follow up at this time.

The first relates to financial reporting and the Committee's request for earlier reporting of Integration Authority budgets which are not available until a minimum of 10 weeks after each quarterly period. In your reply you indicate ongoing work to ensure these are available no later than 10 weeks after the quarterly period. The Committee have highlighted this prevents Parliament from holding timeous monitoring and scrutiny of a significant portion of the overall Scottish budget, some £9.4billion is allocated to them. The proposed arrangements would mean that the first opportunity to scrutinise any financial data for 2020-21 would be in September 2020, more than six months into the financial year.

While the Committee have made their position clear in relation to this delay I would welcome your view as to whether you consider it acceptable for the funding body to be so handicapped in undertaking scrutiny together with the action available to the Scottish Government short perhaps of legislation to allow the almost £2.5billion per quarter allocation to be more closely monitored here.

The second area concerns investment in the community. You helpfully provide a number of examples of community spend saving hospital attendance which is welcome. Can you also provide detail for each example of the financial benefits the

spend is intended to produce for secondary care. Perhaps you would also confirm in relation to ophthalmology, where you earlier noted increased demand and have helpfully provided detail of supplementary claims being made, the detail of the associated costs of activity levels that have led to the budget being able to be held at the same level.

It would be helpful to have this information by 25 June.

Yours sincerely



Lewis Macdonald
Convener, Health and Sport Committee