



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Elinor Mitchell
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Scottish Governmentt

Via email only

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Dear Elinor and Richard

Pre Budget Scrutiny on 11 August 2020

Thank you both for appearing before the Committee on 11 August as part of our pre budget scrutiny for 2021-2022. The Committee found the session both helpful and informative and I am writing to request some clarification on certain areas and to seek a variety of documents and papers you offered to provide. References throughout this letter are to the [Offiical Report of the session](#).

You explained (col 3) how health board costs are being collected and collated in relation to the prospective allocation of health consequentials. Can you confirm that information will be made available to the Parliament.

The Committee understood you to say that the costs arising from the Covid outbreak will not adversely impact on health board in the current financial year (col 5). Can you confirm our understanding and also that a similar situation will arise in the next financial year?

Richard referred to consideration of efficiencies that might have arisen to assist boards to return to financial balance (col 6) and we would welcome detail on these and the impact they are anticipated to have on the current budget deficits.

Could you provide detail on the plans and timescales to scale up the number of contract tracers including where they will be located (col 9) together with any details about how the increased resources, including testing capacity, will be used. (col 9).

On delayed discharge we note the single focus which has allowed numbers to be reduced and the success of this exercise. Has any work been undertaken to obtain the views of those discharged and their relatives? (col 11). Can you provide detail of the amount this has saved secondary care and which should have then been allocated as set aside sum which links into the comments made by Elinor in relation to the distribution of resources. In that regard we are pleased to see the comments in our previous budget report in relation to the identification of relative costs being taken forward.

Can you provide detail on the specific actions Richard indicated Edinburgh IJB requires to take (col 13).

There was discussion around PPE supplies and the buy-and-make approach now being taken. Can you provide detail of how the costs of that approach compare with previous costs (col 17).

The Committee noted the use being made of Community Hubs and the respective numbers provided (col 18) and look forward to the evaluation to follow. We would welcome the comparative figures from this exercise including the reduction in costs arising to GPs. Meantime are you able to provide detail of the reduction in GP contacts that have occurred?

There were various exchanges around reductions in staff costs and other savings from the turning off of NHS services and while we note the comment on many costs being fixed we would welcome detail on how the staff resource across all of the services impacted has been reallocated.

In responding on this aspect Richard indicated some costs have been expended in supporting Covid responses (col 22). Can you indicate how those costs are being accounted for and the impact they have on the amount of sums allocated to address the pandemic costs earlier discussed.

You also offered to supply the following documents and papers:

- The current maintenance backlog figure and approach being taken to reduce this (col 7)
- Detail of the changes made to delivery of services (col 8)
- Details of the lessons learned exercise conducted with the social care partnerships (col12)
- Details of PPE projections, plans and spending plans (col 15)
- The report on the running costs of NHS Louise Jordan (col 20)

It would be helpful to have this information by 31 August

Yours sincerely

Lewis Macdonald
Convener, Health and Sport Committee