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Lewis Macdonald MSP  
Convener  
Health and Sport Committee

By Email.

3 February 2021

Dear Lewis

## **CENTRE OF EXPERTISE – NHS SCOTLAND ASSURE**

The Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-20, said that to ensure patient safety we would create a new national body to strengthen infection prevention and control, including in the built environment. The body would have oversight for the design, construction and maintenance of major infrastructure developments within the NHS and it would play a crucial policy and guidance role regarding incidents and outbreaks across health and social care.

To deliver against that commitment, NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) have been working with stakeholders across the system to develop and implement a new Interim Review Service. This has worked well and already extensive and specialised technical support has been provided to the Baird and Anchor project in Aberdeen, the Elective Care Programme and most notably NHS Louisa Jordan, where this service was instrumental in designing, procuring, building and commissioning a new, fully compliant hospital within three weeks.

The plan was for this Interim Review Service to transition into the NHS Scotland Assure 'Compliance' service at launch on 1 April 2021. The launch of the service would also require a change in process, in that engagement with NHS Scotland Assure would become mandatory for Boards. However, to get to that launch date further input and engagement is required from staff in NHS Boards and from staff in NSS, all of whom are being stretched by the pandemic response. Due to these challenges, I have therefore decided to delay the launch of the service until June 2021 to allow for the anticipated pandemic impact on NHS Boards to start to subside.

The on-going support provided to our NHS capital infrastructure projects will remain, but it is important that NHS staff are able to influence the long-term direction of travel of NHS Scotland Assure.

**JEANE FREEMAN**

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