

Scottish Government submission of 18 February 2022

PE1723/R - Essential tremor treatment in Scotland

Thank you for your letter of 24 January 2022 on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee regarding further questions in relation to Petition PE1723 - Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to raise awareness of essential tremor and to support the introduction and use of a focus ultrasound scanner for treating people in Scotland who have this condition.

I note that the Committee, in consideration of evidence from the University of Dundee following its meeting on 19 January 2022 is interested to know:

- When is the pause on NSSC applications likely to be removed?
- Does the Scottish Government intend to provide dedicated funding to ensure the MRgFUS service can be made available to more ET patients in Scotland?
- What plans are in place to raise general awareness of Essential Tremor amongst patients and healthcare professionals?

With regard to the first question, NSSC are currently only considering applications that directly relate to patient safety whilst NHS Scotland continues to support the COVID-19 recovery agenda and remobilisation of services. However, NSD advise with agreement from the NHS Scotland Board Chief Executives that they will resume applications for commissioning of new services in April 2022, but are mindful that we remain in a pandemic state.

Meanwhile evidence continues to be gathered on the effectiveness of the technology available. NSD continues to engage with the clinical team in Tayside to fully understand what would be required to commission a national designation in Scotland should there be a decision to do so.

Moving now to the second question, I can confirm that the Scottish Government has not committed funding to the MRgFUS service in 2022/2023. The evidence base gathered on the effectiveness of the technology will inform consideration on any future financial investment.

Specialist services are commissioned to support patients living with a rare condition or who have highly specialised needs. They are likely to be hosted by only one or two NHS Health Boards, with all Boards agreeing to pay a share of the nationally-hosted service.

In regard to the final question, I want to assure you that the Scottish Government is committed to working with patients and healthcare professionals to continue raising awareness of neurological conditions in Scotland like Essential Tremor. In December 2019, we published a [Neurological Care and Support – National Framework for Action](#) with a vision to ensure everyone with a neurological condition, including tremor-causing conditions, can access the care and support they need to live well on their own terms. Over five years we will invest £4.5 million of funding to implement the Framework's 17 commitments.

Implementation of the Framework has remained supported and prioritised throughout the pandemic. Key priorities for delivery in 2021-22 focus on improving information for patients and carers, better options to support self-management, developing improved care pathways, workforce, accurate data gathering, and use of digital health to support improvements in services

The Scottish Government have commissioned Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) to support quality assurance of the implementation of the HIS General Standards for Neurological Care and Support. This will support the delivery of the Neurological Framework and help to drive up standards of care.

We are actively engaging with NHS Inform on addressing gaps in patient information about neurological conditions via their website, following a prioritisation survey which was conducted with patient organisations.

I hope this reply is helpful to the Petitioner and the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee.