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Neil Findlay MSP
Convener
Health and Sport Committee

17 November 2017

NHS Lothian – St John's Hospital – Whistleblowing Allegations

I am writing to advise you that I will be releasing a media statement today in relation to allegations of non-compliance with recording practices in relation to waiting times against the four hour A&E target at St John's Hospital, NHS Lothian. NHS Lothian is also issuing a statement.

These allegations were made by a whistle-blower on 11 October 2017 and I immediately instructed NHS Lothian to carry out a full internal investigation, which was underway within a few days. NHS Lothian is investigating these concerns under NHS Lothian's Whistleblowing Policy. The internal investigation is on-going and has been extended to include the remaining A&E departments across NHS Lothian with a targeted completion date in late November 2017.

I received the interim report from the Boards investigation earlier this week, which concludes that there are areas of concern in relation to waiting times practices at St John's hospital. On that basis, I have now asked the Scottish Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, Chaired by Professor Derek Bell, to undertake an external review to investigate the full circumstances of the allegations and the findings outlined in the Board's internal report. NHS Lothian has welcomed this support.

I expect to receive an update on the independent Review in January 2018; I will write to the Committee again at that time.

In the meantime, my officials will continue to work very closely with the Board to ensure that lessons are learned from the investigation and recommendations made are fully implemented as soon as possible.

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