

SCOTTISH HOSPITALS INQUIRY

OPENING STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF GREATER GLASGOW HEALTH BOARD (KNOWN AS NHS GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE)

FOR THE HEARING COMMENCING ON 20 SEPTEMBER

1. On 03 July 2015 the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, (“QEUH”) and the Royal Hospital for Children, (“RHC”) in Glasgow were officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen, a historic date which represented the realisation of the cornerstone of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde’s, (“NHSGGC”) Acute Services Strategy, initially formulated in 2002. That strategy had at its heart the delivery of the highest standards of healthcare provision to the community it served, within “state of the art” hospital accommodation designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all patients whilst receiving medical treatment.
2. In these circumstances, it has been a matter of the utmost concern to NHSGGC that, since both the QEUH and RHC opened to the admission of patients in 2015, certain issues have come to light which may have adversely impacted on the specific needs of some patients, including the young and very vulnerable.
3. NHSGGC has the greatest sympathy for the suffering and anguish that has so obviously been experienced by patients and families alike and, against this background, welcomed the announcement made by the then Health Secretary in September 2019 that there would be a Public Inquiry into the issues which have arisen. NHSGGC is determined to ensure that the issues which have required to be addressed in both hospitals do not arise in any other future NHS infrastructure project, and it will provide all the assistance that it can to the Inquiry to enable it to fulfil its vitally important remit.
4. The safety and welfare of its patients always has been, and remains of paramount concern to NHSGGC, and it is committed to seeking to improve the service which it provides to patients and their families wherever possible. If this Inquiry should find, in due course, that there may be any lessons to be learned on the part of NHSGGC in relation to any of the Inquiry’s Terms of Reference, both the Inquiry and the public should be in no doubt that comprehensive steps will be taken by NHSGGC to address those matters robustly and promptly.
5. It is recognised, of course, that the purpose of the evidential hearing to commence on 20 September 2021 is a limited but, nevertheless, vital one; namely to enable patients and their families to share with the Inquiry their respective experiences, and perceptions of how the issues being investigated by the Inquiry impacted upon each of them. NHSGGC will listen carefully and sympathetically to the evidence to be led and will, in its submission at the conclusion of the Inquiry, provide comment, where appropriate, in order to endeavour to assist the Inquiry in its consideration of that evidence. At this juncture, however, on behalf of NHSGGC I would merely wish to conclude this brief statement by providing reassurance to all patients and families who have experienced distress, anguish and suffering that, wherever possible, NHSGGC will continue to provide support to all

those whose lives have been impacted by the issues to be explored in this Inquiry and that, as previously indicated, NHSGGC will assist the Inquiry to the fullest extent it can.

Peter Gray QC
06 September 2021