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Mr Michael Kellet
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Our Ref: AR02/OFH/MK/cw

10th April 2018

Dear Michael

I write in response to your letter of 4th April 2018 regarding overnight primary care emergency services in Fife.

I was very disappointed to read your letter and immediately wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport asking what steps the government are taking to address the difficulties in recruiting GPs and Primary Care medical staff given that this is an issue of workforce planning, or indeed a failure to plan for the future and ensure there are the numbers of people being trained for these specialist care roles.

I note that in discussion with other MSPs in Fife there is also a view that this decision does not fit with the Scottish Government's route map to the 2020 vision for health and social care which states:

'Specific work will be done to improve services at weekends and out-of-hours in both urban and remote and rural areas: 'to develop more person-centred health and care services (the public will be given) a voice on their experiences to drive up the quality of care, promote personal responsibility for health and wellbeing, and support self-management...We will refocus our efforts on health inequalities particularly in the context of benefits cuts which will impact those most at risk of ill-health. We will do this by targeting improvement resources into primary care in the most deprived areas of Scotland including staff and equipment such as tele-health facilities, learning from and rolling out successful initiatives such as the 'deep-end' GP practices..'

I have signed a joint letter organised by Jenny Gilruth MSP regarding Glenrothes but my concerns, the very same concerns, also apply to Dunfermline and St Andrews. However, I would also make the point that we need to understand if this is simply a Fife issue and therefore is it a failing within the Health and Social Care Partnership in Fife, or is it part of a wider/

wider problem facing other health and social care organisations across Fife? I would be grateful therefore if you could give me your view on this given that Fife would seem to be out of line with the Scottish Governments route map, are they alone?

Can I also ask for more detail of the extent of the problem in terms of the number of GPs and Primary Care medical staff shortages in Fife for these overnight services and is there a shortage for day services during weekends and in the evenings? I hope you will agree it is not unreasonable to want to get the whole picture.

Can you say what the current staffing levels for overnight services were at Victoria Hospital leading up to the 9th and what they are now?

You say the number attending the centres is around 11 in any one night, however, can I request you provide me with the numbers attending each of the three centres between 12th March and 18th March for each night, ie 12 midnight to 8.00 am? I have chosen a random week so I can see what it looked like in each of the local centres.

Can I also ask what discussions took place with NHS Fife regarding this decision as I think there will be a knock on effect at Victoria Hospital?

Finally, I note that you say in the FAQ where a person does not have a car and cannot get a family friend to bring them then a taxi is the only option. Have you looked at what support will be available for people on low incomes with regards to paying for the taxi? Indeed, have you done a poverty impact assessment on this decision?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Rowley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alex Rowley MSP
Mid Scotland and Fife