

**Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery Health and Social Care**  
Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Ath-shlànachadh NHS, Slàinte agus Cùram Sòisealta  
**Michael Matheson MSP/BPA**



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Ian Murray MP  
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Our Reference: 202300363086  
Your Reference: Gracemount Medical Centre

10 July 2023

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your letter of 15 June 2023 regarding GP services in your constituency.

I understand that your constituents have reported some frustration in relation to Gracemount Medical Centre and the proposed Liberton practice.

The former Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Humza Yousaf MSP, wrote to General Practices on 15 November to set his expectations regarding the need to ensure there is an appropriate mix of pre-booked, same day, face to face and remote appointments that suits individual practice populations.

Mr Yousaf also announced the formation of the General Practice Access Group. The group aims to understand the challenges and issues affecting access to General Practice and will establish high level core principles to support and enhance patients' experience of accessing 'The Right Care, Right Time, Right Place'. The group expects to publish its principles later this summer.

If your constituents have complaints regarding the level of access to appointments being provided at any GP practice, I would advise that, in the first instance, they address their complaint to the practice directly, as this is the first stage for raising a concern through the NHS Complaints Handling Procedure and provides an opportunity for problems to be immediately resolved.

I appreciate that not every patient wants to raise a formal concern about their GP practice through the NHS Complaints Handling Procedure, but I think it is important that GP practices are aware of the Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

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concerns that their patients have about them. If your constituent does not wish to raise a concern through this process, I would like to ask my officials to forward this correspondence to the GP practice for its awareness and to provide it with an opportunity to change its processes if appropriate. Should your constituent wish to do so, please advise my Official in the Directorate for Primary Care, Nikki Rae, who can be reached at [Nicola.rae2@gov.scot](mailto:Nicola.rae2@gov.scot).

Additionally, I recognise the population growth in Liberton and surrounding areas creates a need for investment in local healthcare facilities and I understand there will be disappointment that the NHS is not in a position to progress the construction of a new GP practice building in Liberton.

The Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan sets out the government's infrastructure priorities for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26, and is available online at: A National Mission with Local Impact: Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26 - gov.scot ([www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)). However, since this publication there have been some major developments which has affected the Scottish Government's ability to fund capital projects: firstly, the amount of capital grant from the UK Government over the next two years was lower than expected; and secondly, construction costs have increased quickly and significantly.

Consequently we are focusing healthcare infrastructure spending on the priority projects identified in that plan, which for NHS Lothian is the National Treatment Centre and an upgrade of the existing Edinburgh Cancer Centre. In addition, NHS Lothian is progressing other key projects, including a new Eye Hospital and a new Regional Specialist Cancer Centre at the Western General Hospital.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



**MICHAEL MATHESON**

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