

Eye Pavilion to close for six months

The Eye Pavilion will close for six months for repairs from the end of October.

Urgent repair work will have to be carried out at the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion at the end of October.

Extensive work is required on the plumbing system, and all patient appointments which were scheduled to take place from 28 October will be moved to other NHS Lothian facilities. The health board says this move is needed to ensure the safety of staff and patients.

Jim Crombie, Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Lothian, said: "We are very sorry for the inconvenience this will cause our patients and it is not a decision we have taken lightly.

"Whilst patients and staff are not at risk, the work is essential and the advice we have received from our contractors is that this can be done more speedily and safely if the building is temporarily vacated.

"Patient and staff safety are always our chief consideration. Our teams are working hard to minimise disruption and to ensure patients continue to be seen and treated throughout this period."

Those who already have appointments booked for dates from Monday October 28 will be contacted by letter, text or both in good time to arrange their new appointments, starting with patients who have appointments in the week beginning October 28.

Parliamentary discussion

The matter was raised at First Minister's Questions on Thursday in The Scottish Parliament by Lothians MSP, Miles Briggs.

Miles Briggs said: "NHS has announced that urgent major repair works will have to be undertaken at the Princess Alexandra eye pavilion. All patient appointments that are scheduled to take place from 28 October will be moved, and it is expected to be six months before the hospital can reopen. In 2014, the current eye pavilion was declared not fit for purpose. There is now real anger about the latest situation, which demonstrates, yet again, the need for a new eye hospital.

Ministers need to take responsibility. They have cancelled the new hospital on two occasions. Will the First Minister personally meet campaigners and cross-party MSPs to get the replacement hospital back on track?

The First Minister, John Swinney, replied: "I appreciate the anxiety that will be felt because of the issues relating to the eye pavilion in Edinburgh. As we would expect it to, the health board is working to ensure that there is no diminution of the service and support that are available to patients, so that they can have their needs met.

"Obviously, the Government is wrestling with capital funding pressures. Mr Briggs will be familiar with the statements that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government has made about the reduction in our capital budget. That, combined with the significant increase in construction costs that has arisen because of sky-high inflation, has had a consequential effect on our ability to afford projects. Those are the realities that we are wrestling with.

"I assure Mr Briggs that the Government is doing everything that we can to deliver that capital programme, but we cannot

deliver it as timeously as we would like to because of the effect of inflation and the cuts to our capital budget. I assure him that the Government is focused on finding solutions to those challenging issues.”



Scottish Parliament