

First Minister to set out plan for recovery and renewal of the NHS

At an event on Monday the First Minister, John Swinney, will set out his plan for the recovery and renewal of the NHS.

He will outline actions which will ensure that patients have better access to treatment including:

- A clear plan to reduce the immediate pressures on the NHS
- Shifting the balance of care from acute services to the community, including improved support for GPs
- Using digital innovation to improve access to and delivery of care

The First Minister will say: "The NHS is personal for me – I see first hand all that it does for my own family. It is personal for all of us, and that is why we care about it so much. That is why we want to see it thriving again and why we need all parts of Scottish society to unite behind its renewal.

"There are some who oppose the NHS model and believe that the answer to our challenges is privatisation. They want us to believe that the health service is beyond saving and on the point of collapse. But that is simply not true.

"The challenges are great, of that I have no doubt. But I know

that our NHS is fundamentally resilient and robust. There is nothing wrong with the NHS that can't be fixed by what is right with the NHS.

“That includes the staff who are doing phenomenal things under enormous pressure. Innovations like the Rapid Cancer Diagnostic Service delivering dramatic reductions in the time from referral to diagnosis. And initiatives like the HPV vaccine programme which has ensured no cases of cervical cancer in women who have been vaccinated – a remarkable, lifesaving achievement.

“The foundations on which we will build NHS recovery and renewal are strong. But the question is how do we do better? How do we ensure our health service is not just the best in these isles, but the best it can possibly be?

“The actions I am setting out tomorrow will deliver tangible improvements that we can, and will, deliver to make people's experience of the NHS in Scotland better than it is now.

“It will address the immediate issues in our health services, including the problems of access that I know cause so much frustration and unnecessary pain.

“And it will set out a new course so we can safeguard our NHS for the long-term.”



Jackie Baillie, Scottish Labour's Health Spokesperson, said: “It's certainly not too late to save the NHS – but the answer isn't more of the same SNP incompetence we've had for nearly 18 years.

“The reality is that nearly one in six Scots are on an NHS waiting list, thousands are stuck in limbo due to delayed discharge and each week thousands more are stuck waiting more than eight hours in A&E.

“Our NHS needs a new direction and Scottish Labour is ready to deliver it.