

Chief Executives of NHS Boards

By email

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the
World



21 May 2014

Dear Colleagues

As you are aware an application was made to the National Specialist Services Committee (NSSC) in May, which sought national commissioning of the Neurosurgery Managed Service Network (MSN), and NHS Boards' approval to take on the network's annual running costs, once Scottish Government funding ceases at the end of this financial year.

I am delighted that NSSC has recommended national designation of the Neurosurgery MSN and welcome your continued support for the network. I am therefore content to approve the Committee's recommendation that the required funding is top-sliced from NHS Board allocations from April 2015.

Since its inception in 2009, the network has brought a strategic overview to the planning and organisation of Scotland's neurosurgical service and provided an opportunity for neurosurgical teams to participate actively in the development of services.


I have been greatly impressed by the MSN's focus on improving outcomes for patients through the delivery of a single, co-ordinated, neurosurgery service for Scotland, that retains the existing adult and paediatric centres, and ensures the provision of person centred services locally, the promotion of patient safety, and the implementation of uniform clinical standards and clear referral pathways.

Earning the confidence of patients and carers, the Scottish Government, NHS Boards, and the public has been critical to its success, as has the need for the MSN to strike an appropriate balance between highly specialised services developed on a national basis, and services that can be provided safely at local level.

The MSN will therefore retain the necessary powers to allow it to take robust strategic planning and operational decisions in relation to neurosurgery on behalf of NHSScotland.

In line with current governance arrangements, the Chair of the MSN Board will continue to report to me. However from April next year, the MSN will also provide its annual report

and an update on its progress with its business plan directly to NSSC for consideration and comment prior to my annual meeting with the Chair.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alex Neil".

ALEX NEIL