

PE1432/F

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The Scottish  
Government

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Your ref: PE1432

23 October 2012

Dear Stuart

Thank you for your letter of 1 October 2012 regarding petition PE1432 about emergency ambulance provision in Scotland's remote and rural areas. You sought a reply by 19 October 2012, please accept my apologies for missing this deadline. A response to the question posed to the Scottish Government is set out below.

***The Committee noted the response time performances for Dumfries and Galloway, in particular the category A calls. Please set out what actions and discussions have taken place with the SAS to secure improvement in response times for Dumfries and Galloway.***

As I noted in my letter of 23 July, we recognise that targets set at a mainland Scotland level will mean that there may be some communities where they are not routinely met. We expect the Scottish Ambulance Service to demonstrate that across all parts of Scotland it is working to secure continuous improvement in both response times and the quality of care provided. It is important to recognise that good progress has been made in relation to the Category A response time target; at an all mainland Scotland level performance has improved from 62% in 2007/08 to 73% in 2011/12. For the Dumfries and Galloway area, the equivalent figures are 58% in 2007/08 to 66.9% in 2011/12.

The performance of the Scottish Ambulance Service is measured against a range of targets and indicators, recognising that response times are only one measure of performance and must be balanced with the quality of outcomes and experience for patients. Appropriate tasking and triage of resources enables the correct resource to get to the incident and then ensures the patient reaches the correct location for definitive care.

That said, the achievement of the Category A response time target continues to be a high priority for the Scottish Government and the Scottish Ambulance Service and is discussed on a regular basis. At the public Annual Review of the Scottish Ambulance Service on 21

August 2012, chaired by the previous Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon MSP, there was a substantive discussion about the ongoing daily focus and monitoring by the service to deliver response time targets across Scotland. Key in securing improvement going forward will be the effective utilisation of data and evidence to ensure demand and resources are effectively aligned, supported by the enhanced clinical support that is being developed in the Ambulance Control Centres. In particular, the service have recently purchased 'Optima Predict' a simulation based planning tool that analyses and processes data against a range of scenarios. This will allow the service to more effectively and robustly identify the resource requirements for an area, including the number of crews required, and where these are best located to deliver the best possible response to patients.

We have been assured that the Scottish Ambulance Service stand ready to discuss any aspect of their performance with local communities and I hope this offer will be taken up, indeed I am aware there has been recent local engagement with the Community Council in Dalbeattie.

I hope this is helpful, please get in touch if you require further information at this stage.

Yours sincerely

**FRANK STRANG**

Deputy Director for Primary Care