

## Scottish Liberal Democrat leader raises Ryehill Health Centre with Cabinet Secretary for Health #dundeewestend



As recently reported in the Courier (see below), the Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP has intervened in the Ryehill Health Centre concerns by raising the issue with Humza Yousaf, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

Alex said :

**“I have raised the concerns over Ryehill Health Centre with the health secretary at the request of West End Councillor Fraser Macpherson who has already asked NHS Tayside to consider taking over the running of the health centre rather than see it closed and the patients having to be disbursed to other GP practices.**

**“The impact of having to absorb 5400 patients into other local GP practices would be very significant, adding to pressure in these other practices but also meaning that all the Ryehill patients will have to be found new GPs – a huge task.**

**“It would make a lot of sense for the health board to take over the direct running of Ryehill and I have asked the health secretary to step in to ensure that NHS Tayside taking over the direct running of the health centre is firmly on the table.”**

I had already written to Lorna Birse-Stewart, Chair of Tayside Health Board, and Grant Archibald, Chief Executive of NHS Tayside seeking clarification of the Health Board’s commitment to the 5400 Dundee patients affected by the proposed closure of the Ryehill Health Centre and saying it should do all it can to keep the practice open.

NHS Tayside needs to be much clearer as to how it will support the patients at Ryehill and I have asked for assurances that the Health Board has discussed all the options and will consider taking over the running of the health centre rather than see it closed and the patients disbursed to other GP practices.

NHS Tayside and the Health and Social Care Partnership have to be clear as to how it is tackling the Ryehill medical practice’s decision to relinquish its contract with the Health Board and supporting the thousands of patients involved to have access to GP services locally.

I cannot accept that, after so many years of service to the community, the approach of the Health Board is to simply accept it closes. It must look at the option of running the practice itself to keep it open. NHS Tayside already directly runs four GP practices across Tayside including the Maryfield Health Centre. If it can be done there, it can be done at Ryehill Health Centre.

I am very pleased that Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP has now raised this with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care as we need assurances from ministers and from the healthboard that the proposal to save Ryehill Health Centre through direct NHS Tayside management will be actively considered by the Health Board.

It strikes me as infinitely preferable that the health board keeps the practice open under NHS Tayside management than closes it which would mean thousands of people having to be found a new GP. Adding 5400 people across the other GP practices in Dundee will simply add to the pressure on these practices and the quality of service and I don’t see that as in any way the best outcome.



HEALTHY DEBATE: Scottish Lib Dem leader Alex Cole-Hamilton has called for action.

# Yousaf urged to act over GP practice fears

DEREK HEALEY

**H**umza Yousaf has been told to sort out the future of local medical care for thousands of patients in Tayside as health chiefs consider whether to take direct control of two closing GP practices.

Some 5,400 people will be affected by the closure of Ryehill Medical Practice in June this year, while a further 3,500 will be hit by Friockheim Health Centre shutting in May.

Both closures have been blamed on a national shortage of GPs.

NHS Tayside confirmed a number of options are being considered to cover services, including the centres merging with other practices.

Health chiefs are also looking into whether patients could be registered to a different practice in their local area – although there are concerns about the strain many centres are already under.

A third option – the practices being run directly by NHS Tayside – would depend on the board being

able to provide GPs to deliver care.

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton confirmed he has written to Health Secretary Humza Yousaf calling for direct management to be fully considered.

He said: "It would make a lot of sense for the health board to take over the direct running of Ryehill and I have asked the health secretary to step in to ensure that NHS Tayside taking over the direct running of the health centre is firmly on the table."

NHS Tayside already runs four GP practices across Tayside, including the Maryfield Medical Centre.

North East Labour MSP Michael Marra confirmed he also wrote to the health secretary, on February 16, but said he has not yet received a response.

Mr Marra challenged Mr Yousaf at the Scottish Parliament yesterday on what he is doing to support patients in Tayside.

He said: "There's 5,400

patients who have been thrown into limbo. Can the cabinet secretary give any clarity on what happens next, where will they get their care and when will they know?"

Mr Yousaf confirmed NHS Tayside is working with the respective health and social care partnerships to consider how best to proceed.

He said: "They will look – and are having active discussions – with neighbouring GP practices to assess whether or not they can take on more patients.

"But also they will look to see if any practice has a desire or intention to take over Ryehill practice or indeed Friockheim practice.

"When a decision is made on how best to deliver local general medical services, then of course patients will also be informed directly."

An NHS Tayside spokeswoman said that ensuring ongoing, safe and person-centred care for patients is a "key priority in relation to any decision".

