

SNP admits Sick Kids won't open for at least another year

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Edinburgh's new Sick Kids hospital won't be open for at least another year, and fixing the latest blunders will cost the taxpayer an extra £16 million.

In a statement at Holyrood today, health secretary Jeane Freeman revealed problems with ventilation, water systems and drainage will "take time" to address.

She told MSPs: "It is clear that there is significant work to be undertaken to ensure the site is fully compliant."

On top of the additional £16 million costs, NHS Lothian will continue to pay £1.35 million a month to the site owners at Little France, which will total a further £16 million by the time the hospital opens.

The replacement Sick Kids was supposed to open at the end of 2012, but has been repeatedly delayed due to a range of "catastrophic failings".

Ms Freeman also told parliament today that the adjacent brain unit will be impacted, and may not open until the spring.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"This confirms that patients and their families will have had to wait nearly a decade longer than promised for this much-needed hospital.

"On top of that, the taxpayer will have to fork out more than £30 million between now and next autumn to compensate for these catastrophic failings.

"Staff and families alike will also be sceptical about whether this hospital will be open by next autumn.

"They've been promised – year after year – that new timescales will be adhered to, and they've been repeatedly let down.

"All over the world new hospitals are built and delivered on time and on budget.

"Yet under the SNP, from the very outset, this project has been a farce.

"As a result, thousands of young and vulnerable patients from across Scotland will suffer.

"In a cynical move SNP ministers think a 30-minute statement and sneaking out two major reports on the hospital is acceptable when it comes to answering

questions.

“It is not and they should hang their heads in shame if they think this is how they prevent parliament holding them to account.

“The scandal surrounding the construction of the new Sick Kids hospital has come to symbolise this SNP government’s incompetence and mismanagement of our NHS.”