

Yet another delay for the new Sick Kids hospital

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The saga of Edinburgh's new Sick Kids hospital is set to be extended again – after health secretary Jeane Freeman admitted the latest timescale was “under review”.

The facility, which is now eight years late, was supposed to finally open in the autumn.

However, Ms Freeman admitted today in a parliamentary answer that the handing over looked set to be held up again because of coronavirus pressures.

She said: “NHS Lothian is working closely with IHSL to ensure delivery of the programme as close to the timeframe of a full handover in Autumn 2020, but this timeframe is now under review. A refreshed programme is likely to be available during the second half of May and I will of course keep Parliament updated.”

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said while this particular delay may be understandable given the Covid-19 crisis, it could have all been avoided had the SNP hit any of the previous targets for opening.

The much-needed facility has been plagued by problems, meaning staff and patients have been forced to continue to use the ancient building in the Sciennes area of the city, which the health board itself has acknowledged is no longer fit for purpose.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“Obviously with the current situation it’s inevitable there will be delays with almost all projects of this nature.

“What wasn’t inevitable was the SNP’s failure to get this hospital open in anything like the timeframe initially set out.

“This vital hospital – which was commissioned, planned and built by the SNP – was meant to open in 2012.

“It should currently be open, thriving and assisting our dedicated NHS staff with the coronavirus battle.

“Instead, it lies empty while the rest of the hospital estate is placed under immense pressure.

“Families across the east of Scotland will not forget the SNP’s spectacular

mismanagement of the Sick Kids project.”