

Petitioner submission of 23 July 2023

PE2032/B: Improve the support available to injured soldier and veterans in Scotland

Below is my reply to the [Scottish Government submission](#).

My petition calls for clear patient pathways for their injuries to be treated by appropriate consultants; and establishing a veterans trauma network, similar to that which operates in England and Wales.

Without clear patient pathways, veterans have been left to suffer in extreme pain, with life-changing conditions, over many years. They have not been seen by or referred to the appropriate consultant.

We have a system whereby scans are taken and sent up to Dundee, and doctors sit with their hands clasped stating there is nothing they can do, while other doctors will recognise you have been all over the place but get up, open the door, and stand there until the patient leaves. This is not what is called a clear pathway for injuries sustained to be treated.

The Scottish Government go on about NHS champions, but this is also another system that is not working. How do we as veterans meet these people to make sure our health needs and family needs are being taken care of properly and get the proper support we require?

I first brought my own condition to the attention of the Scottish NHS in 2018, and yet they are just establishing a trauma network. This is too late for some injured veterans and civilian personnel who have already lost a lot, and lost their livelihood and brought serious hardship to their families.

The Scottish Government's response states they aim to reply to correspondence within 20 days of receipt.

In my experience this is not true. I wrote to Humza Yousaf when he was the health secretary about my findings and everything else on this serious condition and received no reply. I also sent the same letters to Alex Cole-Hamilton, and Anas Sarwar, who did not reply. Douglas Ross was the only one that replied to say that he would be "happy to forward your email to one of my colleagues who has responsibility for your area."

The above three gentlemen are opposition party leaders and are supposed to hold the First Minister to account when things are going seriously wrong. It is not happening in this case.

When citizens' and veterans' rights are not being adhered to and individuals are left to suffer over many years despite sharing evidence of their suffering, it is my view that this could be considered a breach of Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR), which protects persons from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment.

When citizens and injured veterans are denied treatment, and not put in front of professionally trained consultants for their injuries, which then result in life-changing, permanent conditions, they should be able to raise these concerns and have them addressed.

If these concerns cannot be investigated by Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), then where do we go for answers?

I also wish to make the Committee aware that the condition Saphenous Neuritis was first described in 1741 by the Edinburgh surgeon, Alexander Monro, and not 1960 which I stated in the petition.

Before lodging this petition, I also submitted Freedom of Information requests relating to:

- The number of specialist consultants available to treat soldiers with shrapnel nerve injuries;
- Whether injured soldiers can be referred from Scotland to England, where there more specialists;
- The reasons why veterans or members of the public presenting with multiple neuro conditions are seen by orthopaedic rather than neurology consultants