

PE1517/LL

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport submission of 17 May 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the Public Petitions Committee today to discuss the Independent Review of Transvaginal mesh.

I wish to inform you that I have commissioned Alison Britton, Professor of Healthcare and Medical Law, as an independent expert to examine and report on the process of the Independent Review. Professor Britton currently works in Glasgow Caledonian University and is a specialist in public healthcare, clinical negligence, mental health law and professional ethics. In recent years, her interests have focused upon the practical application and the role of law in matters of public health. She is currently working with the GMC on their review of consent.

Professor Britton has been involved in consultancy work for the World Health Organisation, the Department of Health (England and Wales) and the organisation, Childlessness Overcome through Surrogacy (C.O.T.S). She has sat on two BMA ethics' committees, contributing to their Codes of Practice on Advance Statements. She has recently completed three year tenure as Subject Lead for Law.

Professor Britton was appointed legal adviser to the Health Committee of the Scottish Parliament for the Adult Support and Protection (Sc) Act 2007 and Health and Sport Committee on the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill in 2010. She is the Convenor of the Health and Medical Law Sub Committee for the Law Society of Scotland. She is an honorary tutor in Cardiff School of Medicine for collaborative work with Cardiff University and the British Pain Society on palliative care and resolution of law and damages for patients in chronic pain. She is a regular visitor to the Grameen College of Nursing, Dhaka, Bangladesh, advising on Academic Quality Enhancement, Audit and Design in learning and teaching. She delivered their inaugural Professorial Lecture in May 2014.

As I indicated in the Statement to Parliament the areas that I expect to be covered by Professor Britton will include:

- To consider how the process was undertaken and see what lessons can be learned in the future:
 - terms of reference of the Independent Review;
 - selection of review committee members;
 - conflicts of interest;
 - conduct of members and how this was managed;
 - management and presentation of evidence; and
 - Management of external influences.
- To draft guidance for the Chairs and members of all independent inquiries to ensure full understanding of the roles and terms of references, good governance and support for those who give their time and expertise.

I am keen that your Committee has sight of these areas, and I can confirm that Professor Britton's report will be made public.