



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Caroline Lamb
Chief Executive, NHS Scotland and
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Public Audit Committee
Room T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
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Dear Caroline,

NHS in Scotland 2022

Thank you for your letter of 22 July 2023, responding to the Committee's request for additional information in relation to National Treatment Centres, GP numbers and the future of the dental workforce.

The Committee considered your correspondence at its meeting on 14 September and continues to be concerned by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on dentistry students which as your letter confirms, "effectively suspended undergraduate and vocational training for one year". The Committee therefore agreed to seek further detail on the future dental workforce in Scotland.

Your letter notes that there are 55 dentists per 100,000 of the population within the NHS workforce in Scotland. **The Committee requests a similar statistical breakdown for dentists that was provided for GPs in your letter of 22 July in relation to the headcount and WTE for dentists in Scotland, including the associated trend analysis over the last 10 years. The Committee also asks for a breakdown of dentists practising in Scotland by gender.**

Your letter further states that “the resumption of [...] training means we are training 160 dentists per year, 5 per cent of the total workforce”. **The Committee would be interested to know how many funded dentistry places there are for home-based students at Scottish universities.**

Lastly, given the conclusion in the most recent dental workforce report¹ published by NHS Education for Scotland, that “based on a series of estimates and assumptions, the supply of dentists is forecast to fall short of the number of dentists required to maintain current registration rates”, **the Committee seeks further information on the Scottish Government’s long-term plans for the sustainability of the dental workforce, particularly in terms of how any gaps in dentist positions will be filled.**

I would be grateful if you could provide a response to this letter by **25 October 2023**.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Leonard MSP
Convener

¹ [The Dental Workforce in Scotland 2021 | Turas Data Intelligence \(nhs.scot\)](#)