



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Public Audit Committee

Stephen Boyle  
Auditor General for Scotland

**22 November 2024**

Dear Stephen

### Alcohol and drug services

Thank you for providing evidence to the Public Audit Committee on the above report, at its meeting on 21 November 2024. Following the evidence session, the Committee agreed to write to you with some additional questions relating to issues raised in the report.

### Workforce

The report states that the alcohol and drug workforce plays a “pivotal role in people’s willingness to engage with services and to stay in treatment”. The report goes on to explain that—

“Short-term funding of service providers means that much of the workforce is on short-term temporary contracts, particularly third sector providers. This can lead to high staff turnover as support workers seek longer-term job security which leads to continually training new staff, for example in how to take a trauma informed approach. This has a negative impact on people accessing treatment and the quality of support they receive, including:

- frequently meeting new key workers
- having to build new relationships
- having to re-tell their life histories.”

**The Committee is interested to understand in further detail, the reasons for and the impact of, the high turnover of staff in the alcohol and drug services workforce. The Committee would welcome any further information or views that you may have on this matter.**

The report goes on to state that—

“The Scottish Government has set out actions to address the challenges experienced by the alcohol and drug sector workforce in its 2023–2026 action plan”.

---

Contact: Public Audit Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP.  
Email [publicaudit.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:publicaudit.committee@parliament.scot). We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

**The Committee seeks your views on how effective the Scottish Government's 2023-26 workforce plan has been in addressing the challenges faced by the alcohol and drug services workforce to date.**

## **Volunteer engagement**

The report states that volunteers play a pivotal role in supporting recovery within Communities. The report goes on to state that—

“ADPs report, however, that resource constraints limit training and the capacity to work with other organisations to help volunteers secure jobs in the sector. Costs to support volunteer engagement can also inhibit participation.”

**The Committee is interested to hear from you on what steps you believe the Scottish Government and others could take to help support volunteer engagement.**

In order for your response to be considered at the Committee's evidence session with the Chief Executive of NHS Scotland and Director-General Health and Social Care on 19 December, the Committee would welcome a response by **Friday 13 December 2024**.

Yours sincerely,



**Richard Leonard MSP**

**Convener**