

20 December 2024

Richard Leonard MSP
Convener
Public Audit Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Convener

NHS in Scotland 2024 report

During the evidence session on 12 December 2024 regarding the above report we committed to clarifying in writing the following points:

Planned publications on integration and delayed discharge

The Accounts Commission's financial briefing on Integration Joint Boards is planned for publication in March 2025, rather than April as was stated in the session. The Accounts Commission and I will also be publishing a joint briefing on integration performance data in September 2025. We also intend for work on a joint performance audit on delayed discharges to commence in early 2025.

Staff absence data

During the session there were also questions raised on staff sickness absence rates and how this may compare with other health services (paras 23 and 24 of the official report). We do not have any further information on this, and as stated in the session this may be an area for the committee to explore with NHS leaders.

Public private partnership contracts

The Convener had a question on public private partnership (PPP) contracts and the longevity of payments to be made under these contracts set out in Exhibit 7 of the report. My predecessors report on private finance investment ([Privately financed infrastructure investment: The Non-Profit Distributing \(NPD\) and hub models](#)) provides useful information on different models of investment, and Exhibit 1 in that report provides a timeline for when these models were introduced.

Within our NHS in Scotland 2024 report, the exhibit 7 which the Convener remarked on includes charges payable under Private Finance Initiative (PFI), Non-profit distributing and Hub contracts. There have been no public private partnership (NPD or Hub) contracts signed since 2019.

While most PPP contracts are for 25-30 years some are longer. The last health PFI contract was signed in 2009 but payments run until 2041/42. Exhibit 7 in the report includes a large number of health facilities including larger acute hospitals as well as smaller community hospitals and health centres.

I hope you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Boyle
Auditor General for Scotland