



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Caroline Lamb  
Chief Executive of NHS Scotland and  
Director-General Health and Social  
Care  
Scottish Government

**Public Audit Committee**  
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By email only

9 February 2024

Dear Caroline,

**The 2022/23 audit of the Scottish Prison Service**

At its meeting on [1 February 2024](#), the Public Audit Committee took evidence from the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS) on the above [section 22 report](#).

The Committee agreed to write to you, in your role as Chief Executive of NHS Scotland, to seek a written response to issues raised during the evidence session and more widely in the section 22 report on the impact of the failures of the Scottish Courts Custody Prisoner Escorting Services (SCCPES) contract.

The Committee would welcome a response to the following questions.

Q1: The section 22 report states that failures in the delivery of the SCCPES contract resulted in planned prisoner hospital appointments being postponed or cancelled due to the relevant prisoner not being transferred to the health care facility on time.

The Committee asks if data is available on the impact of these postponed and cancelled appointments on the health of prisoners. It would also be interested to

establish whether NHS Scotland is tracking the cost of these postponed or cancelled appointments.

Q2: The section 22 report also states that to help avoid hospital appointments clashing with court appearances, the Scottish Prison Service had requested that the NHS change the scheduling of hospital appointments prior to 9.30am. The report goes on to state that “the majority of appointments are still at the same time that court deliveries are scheduled”.

The AGS advised during oral evidence that this was an outstanding matter and that discussions to resolve the issue are ongoing. The Committee would be interested to understand—

- If discussions on the scheduling of hospital appointments issue are taking place at a national or NHS Board level?
- The steps that are being taken to resolve the issue, and
- The barriers, if any, faced by the NHS in scheduling appointments for prisoners to avoid clashing with court appearance times.

The Committee would be grateful for a response by **7 March 2024**.

Yours sincerely

**Richard Leonard MSP,  
Convener**