



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Public Audit Committee

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

11 February 2025

Dear Caroline

### NHS in Scotland 2024

Thank you for providing evidence to the Public Audit Committee on the above report, at its meeting on [29 January 2025](#). Following the evidence session, the Committee agreed to write to you with one additional question relating to an issue raised in the report. It also noted that you offered to follow up on a number of other areas and these are referred to below for ease of reference.

#### Focus on preventative measures

The report recommends that “there needs to be an increased and ongoing focus on improving the health of Scotland’s people to reduce the pressure on the NHS. Without this change, the NHS is unlikely to be able to meet growing demand”.

During the evidence session on 12 December 2024 with the Auditor General for Scotland, the Committee heard that “Wider reform and a focus of improving the health of Scotland’s people are essential and need to be part of a clear plan for delivering on the Scottish Government’s vision for health and social care” and that “there has been a lack of a shift towards spending on preventative and early intervention, which would improve population health”.

**Can you please outline the measures that are currently being taken by the Scottish Government to focus more on prevention and early intervention to ensure improvements can be made to population health?**

During the evidence session on 29 January, you also undertook to provide the Committee with the following information:

- **Staff absence:** Data held on a national level on the reasons for sickness absence: breakdown of those off due to illness and stress or injury related absence (in response to the Convener’s question, columns 9).

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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.

- **Financial sustainability:** Data on the costs of prescribed drugs and how these compare with percentages spent in England and Wales. (in response to the Colin Beattie's question, column 12)
- **Reform:** Draft list of medicines and procedures which have been identified to be of limited clinical value (in response to Graham Simpson's question column 21)
- **Ambulance service waiting times:** Further details on the triage process and performance metrics used to determine response (in response to Jamie Greene's question column 41)

The *Official Report* of the committee's meeting can be found here: [Public Audit Committee Official Report, 29 January 2025](#).

I should be grateful for your response by **14 March 2025**.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Leonard". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Richard Leonard MSP**

**Convener**