

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

17th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Tuesday, 10 May 2022

Audit Scotland: NHS in Scotland 2021 Report

Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. At its meeting today, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee will take further evidence on Audit Scotland's [NHS in Scotland 2021](#) report.
2. The Committee will hear from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

Background

3. Audit Scotland published its [NHS in Scotland 2021](#) report on 24 February 2022. This report is published annually and looks at the performance of the NHS in Scotland. The 2021 report focuses on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government's recovery plans for the NHS and how services might be delivered in the future.
4. The key messages from the report are:
 - The NHS in Scotland is operating on an emergency footing and remains under severe pressure.
 - The NHS's ability to plan for recovery from Covid-19 remains hindered by a lack of robust and reliable data across several areas.
 - NHS and social care workforce planning has never been more important.
 - The NHS was not financially sustainable before the pandemic and responding to Covid-19 has increased those pressures.
5. The report makes a number of recommendations for the Scottish Government and NHS Boards.

The Scottish Government should:

- Address the wellbeing risks affecting staff in the Scottish Government's Health and Social Care directorate as well as the NHS and social care workforce.

The Scottish Government and NHS boards should:

- Work with partners in the social care sector to develop a long-term, sustainable solution for reducing delayed discharges from hospital;
- Publish data on performance against the clinical prioritisation categories, to enable transparency about how NHS boards are managing their waiting lists;
- Work with patients on an ongoing basis to inform the priorities for service delivery, and be clear on how services are developed around patients' needs;
- Take a cohesive approach to tackling health inequalities by working collaboratively with partners across the public sector and third sector, and be transparent on how it will do this;
- Improve the availability, quality and use of workforce data to ensure workforce planning is based on accurate projections of need;
- Monitor and manage risks around the impact of additional work outlined in the NHS recovery plan on the NHS workforce, to make sure recovery does not negatively affect staff wellbeing;
- Communicate widely with the public on changes to how services are delivered so that people are aware of how best to access services, and monitor the effectiveness of that communication;
- Prioritise the prevention and early intervention agenda as part of the recovery and redesign of NHS services, to enable the NHS to be sustainable into the future;
- Improve the availability, quality and use of data on primary, community and social care so that service planning is based on accurate measures of existing provision and demand.

6. This report was considered by the Public Audit Committee on [17 March 2022](#).

7. The Committee took evidence on the report from the Auditor General for Scotland at its meeting on [19 April 2022](#).

Clerk to the Committee
5 May 2022