

Jackie Baillie MSP  
Deputy Leader, Scottish Labour  
(via email)

31 October 2022

Dear Ms Baillie,

Thank you for your letter of 5 October to the Director General for Regulation about statistics on waiting times for NHS treatment as they appear in the new NHS Inform dashboard. You were concerned about media reports suggesting that this website understated waiting times for certain procedures.

The dashboard shows the numbers of patients treated in the last quarter and their median wait times by clinical specialty. However, patients who have not yet been treated, some of whom may have been waiting a long time, are not included in these medians. Therefore, the dashboard could potentially mislead some patients about the length of time they may have to wait, particularly if treatment is not classified as urgent.

The Director General for Regulation has today written<sup>1</sup> to Public Health Scotland and the Scottish Government setting out improvements we would like to see made to the site. These include considering the addition of other metrics to reflect the range of waiting times experienced by patients and more accessible information about the strengths and limitations of the statistics.

While the statistics currently presented in the NHS Inform dashboard do not include patients who are still waiting, the official statistics from which they are sourced<sup>2</sup>, provide a wider range of metrics, such as patients waiting at month-end and patient unavailability.

Yours sincerely,



**Sir Robert Chote**  
Chair

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<sup>1</sup> [NHS Inform waiting times](#), Office for Statistics Regulation, 31 October 2022

<sup>2</sup> [NHS waiting times - stage of treatment](#), Public Health Scotland, 6 September 2022