UK Statistics Authority

Penny Young, Interim Chair

Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF
chair@statistics.gov.uk
statisticsauthority.gov.uk

Angela Constance MSP,

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Care,

Scottish Parliament

(via email)

20 November 2026

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

As Interim Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, I am writing on behalf of the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), the regulatory arm of the Authority responsible for safeguarding the appropriate use of statistics in public debate. I am writing in relation to a statement you made during the Scottish Parliament debate on Winter Planning and Hospital Flow on 8 October 2026. We would like to thank Scottish Government statisticians for their engagement with OSR on this matter and for their proactive response. We welcome the correction that has been made, and the steps that Scottish Government has told us it is taking in response to the matter.

During the debate, you said:

> *"Compared with the same period in the previous year, the number of referrals to A and E from that practice [the Lochee practice] has reduced by 30 per cent."*

We understand that this statement was based on unpublished management information and was not supported by publicly available evidence. We also understand that the statement inaccurately described what the figure related to, and that it should instead have referred to referrals to GP out-of-hours services rather than referrals to A&E.

We note the prominent correction that has subsequently been made to the parliamentary record. The revised statement reads:

> *"Compared with the same period in the previous year, initial feedback has reported reductions in the number of referrals to out-of-hours services from that practice."*

Scottish Government has told us that it is taking the following steps:

- engaging with the relevant NHS health board to explore how the information underpinning the revised statement can be made available; and
- considering, over a longer timeframe, how this type of information might be made more readily available to users in a structured way.

These actions, and Scottish Government's engagement with OSR on this matter, are in line with the Standards for Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis. In accordance with the Standards' expectations regarding Decision making and leadership and Equality of access, we encourage you to seek and make use of analytical advice in future public communications, and to rely on published evidence.

Yours sincerely,



Penny Young
Interim Chair