

Date 31 October 2022
Your ref SH Wait Times
Email:
Scott.Heald@phs.scot

Mr Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation
Office for Statistics Regulation
1 Drummond Gate
London
SW1V 2QQ

Dear Ed,

NHS Inform Waiting Times

Thank you for your letter of October 2022 regarding the use of waiting times statistics on the NHS Inform website. The development of this website is a collaboration between Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland and NHS 24.

The NHS Inform dashboard is not an official statistics release but does make use of official statistics on waiting times published by Public Health Scotland (PHS). The NHS Inform dashboard has not been developed to measure performance against national targets – the existing National Statistics published by Public Health Scotland continue to perform this function.

The aim of the NHS Inform dashboard is to provide individual patients with information to indicate how long they may wait to be seen or treated. As present, the median waiting time is presented – the dashboard clearly explains what this statistic means, i.e. that roughly half of patients waited less than the median and half of patients waited longer. I acknowledge that no individual measure can represent the range of waiting times experiences of individual patients and, as you outline, the joint Scottish Government, PHS and NHS24 team are planning to consult users of the NHS Inform dashboard. We will consider alternative and/or additional metrics as part of that review to ensure we are representing the range of waiting times experienced by patients (as some will wait shorter than the median, and some will wait longer).

In the meantime, Public Health Scotland will continue to publish its comprehensive National Statistics, accessed via the Public Health Scotland website (www.publichealthscotland.scot). The latest National Statistics (published on 6 September 2022) are available here: [Stage of treatment waiting times - Inpatients, day cases and new outpatients 30 June 2022 - NHS waiting times - stage of treatment - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

I will keep you informed on progress and your feedback will be incorporated into our review.

Please let me know if you have any further follow-up questions – I'd be happy to pick these up with you and your team.

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Best wishes



Scott

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CC to: Alastair McAlpine, Chief Statistician, Scottish Government