

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation
Office for Statistics Regulation

Date 28th October 2025
Your ref
Our ref SH/EH/SoT/281025
Enquiries to Scott Heald
Email scott.heald@phs.scot

Dear Ed,

NHS STAGE OF TREATMENT WAITING TIMES STATISTICS - NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Following my letter in [August](#), I am pleased to share that PHS has today launched new monthly statistics on NHS Waiting Times – [Stage of Treatment](#). These statistics provide timely and relevant insights into how long patients wait to be seen as new outpatients or admitted for treatment as inpatients or day cases.

This marks a significant improvement from the previous quarterly publications, offering more frequent updates on a topic of high public interest. As I outlined in August, the new statistics are based on updated waiting times guidance issued by the Scottish Government in December 2023, replacing the criteria used since 2012. These changes ensure that the data better reflects the operational practices outlined in that guidance.

To support transparency, coherence and understanding, PHS has also published today:

- A detailed impact assessment report comparing the statistics using both the 2012 and 2023 guidance.
- A [blog](#) explaining how the changes improve the relevance and timeliness of the data.
- New [webpages](#) to help users find all the PHS data (and information about ongoing data developments) relating to commitments in the [NHS Scotland Operational Improvement Plan](#) published by Scottish Government in March 2025.

We will also be engaging directly with key users such as MSPs, parliamentary staff and government officials to help them use these statistics effectively and answer questions about these developments.

We look forward to hearing the feedback from the compliance review your team will be conducting following these developments to the statistics.

I am copying this letter to Alastair McAlpine, Scottish Government Chief Statistician.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Scott Heald', with a stylized, cursive script.

Scott Heald

Director, Data and Digital Innovation

Head of Profession for Statistics