

**Director-General for Health & Social
Care and
Chief Executive of NHS Scotland**
Caroline Lamb

E: dghsc@gov.scot

Richard Leonard, Convener,
Public Audit Committee
Room T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
publicaudit.committee@parliament.scot
30th August 2024

Dear Mr Leonard,

NHS in Scotland 2023 – additional information

In response to the Committee's request for updated figures relating to staff absences and turnover, in my correspondence of 8 August I noted that I would provide further information once NHS Education for Scotland published the sickness absence data for the year to 31 March 2024. The data was published on 13 August.

It shows that, in the year ending 29 February 2024, the sickness absence rate for NHS Scotland was 6.21%. As a comparison, the sickness absence rate for the year ending 31 March 2023 was 6.20%. The chart in Annex A shows the sickness absence rate over the last decade.

The data is to the year ending 29 February because of a data processing error. From the first of April 2024 NHS Agenda for Change staff saw a reduction in their working week from 37.5 hours to 37 hours. However, there was an error in the process to update the contracted and conditioned hours for this change in the Scottish Workforce information Standard System (SWISS) which resulted in the Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) calculations being incorrect.

As such, a combination of data from 29 February 2024 and 30 April 2024 were used to calculate the WTE for 31 March 2024. This change to contracted hours in SWISS also affected the sickness absence data and so sickness absence data for the year ending 29 February 2024 is used instead of that for the year ending 31 March 2024.

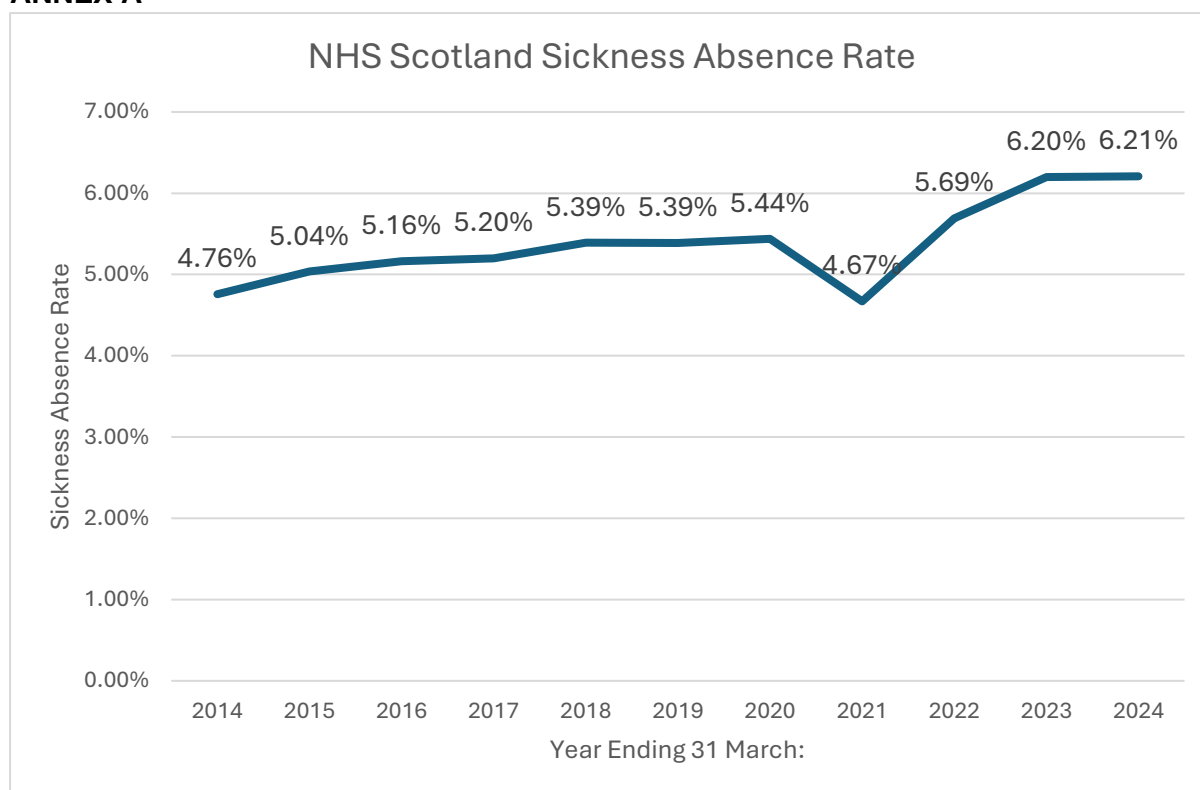
I hope this additional information is helpful.

Many thanks,

Caroline Lamb

Chief Executive: NHS Scotland and Director-General for Health and Social Care

ANNEX A



Notes:

1. The source is the TURAS NHS Education for Scotland workforce statistics: [Data and reports | Turas Data Intelligence \(nhs.scot\)](#)
2. The 2020 and 2021 data do not include COVID-19 related absence.
3. From 1 September 2022, COVID-19 related absences are included as sickness absence.
4. Due to a data processing error the year ending 29 February 2024 was used instead of the year ending 31 March 2024.
5. Further information about the processing error can be found in a statistical publication at [NHS Scotland Workforce](#).