



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Public Audit Committee

Jane O'Donnell
Chief Executive
Scottish Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

Cc: Eddie Follan, Chief Officer

27 February 2026

Dear Jane O'Donnell

Delayed discharges: A symptom of the challenges facing health and social care and Community health and social care: Performance 2025

Following its meeting on [18 February 2026](#), where the Committee heard from the Director-General for Health and Social Care/Chief Executive of NHS Scotland, and the Director of Health and Social Care Performance and Delivery, Scottish Government, the Committee [agreed to write](#) to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) seeking its views on the issues raised in relation to:

- [Delayed discharges: A symptom of the challenges facing health and social care](#)
- [Community health and social care: Performance 2025](#)

The Committee has previously taken evidence from the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS) and the Accounts Commission on [21 January 2026](#) on their joint reports.

Background

The Delayed Discharge report focuses on three main areas:

- What's the problem - the factors that contribute towards delays in discharge
- What's happening – the national and local initiatives to address delayed discharges
- What needs to happen - the need for robust evaluation and analysis to understand costs, impacts and outcomes and the need for a shift in the balance of care.

Contact: Public Audit Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP.
Email publicaudit.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

The Committee would like to know if you accept the findings and recommendations of the report namely those made jointly to the Scottish Government, NHS Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, integration authorities and their partner NHS boards and councils:

- Over the next 12 months, develop a consistent approach to evaluating and reporting on initiatives to improve delayed discharges, such as discharge without delay and the Lothian Partnership, and sharing best practice and areas for improvement. Evaluation should be reported annually and include assessing effectiveness, value for money, and whether the initiatives are improving the balance of care. This evaluation should be used to update current discharge planning guidance (paragraph 109).
- In the next six months, publish guidance to clarify and strengthen the role of integration joint boards and health and social care partnerships in the governance and delivery of the health and social care service renewal framework (paragraph 106).
- Over the next 12 months, provide guidance on, and better promote public awareness of the benefits of, establishing a power of attorney or a guardianship order (paragraph 84).
- Over the next 12 months, work together to develop and action an implementation plan to share learning and practice from digital solutions used for tackling delayed discharges, early intervention and prevention (paragraph 95).

Jointly, integration authorities and their partner NHS boards and councils should:

- In the next six months, ensure they fully implement the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 by understanding the point of the discharge planning process where this is failing to happen, intervening with support for local areas to improve their processes for carers to be involved in discharge planning from the point of admission (paragraph 71).

In relation to Community health and social care: Performance 2025 report, the Committee would like to know if you accept the findings and recommendations of the report, specifically the recommendation to IAs and HSCPs:

- Over the next six months, use the interactive data tool to compare performance with other areas to: – understand and explain in public reports their relative performance in terms of local context, priorities, policy and operational decisions – analyse performance alongside local data to support benchmarking, self-assessment and the development of improvement plans (paragraph 6)

Due to the forthcoming dissolution of the Scottish Parliament, it would be helpful to have a **response by 12 March 2026**. Please contact the Clerks if you have any difficulty meeting this timescale.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Leonard

Richard Leonard MSP

Convener