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Andrew Howlett  
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
T3.40  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

10 January 2014

Dear Mr Howlett

**Consideration of [PE1495](#)**

Thank you for your letter of 12 December asking if Audit Scotland plans to undertake a review of calls to the National Confidential Alert Line for NHS Employees. Audit Scotland currently does not have any specific plans to carry out such a review.

In our report, *Management of patients on NHS waiting lists*, published in February 2013, we highlighted the importance of staff being able to raise concerns about the management of patients' care safely. The Scottish Government publishes information on the number of calls to the National Confidential Alert Line and the high-level classification of the types of issues raised, and we consider this information as part of our audit work. We also note that the Scottish Government has been carrying out a survey of NHS staff on their awareness of, and views on, the National Confidential Alert Line, and we look forward to seeing the results of that survey.

We keep our work programme under review to ensure that our work is adding most value from the resources available to us, and we may consider carrying out work in this area at some time in the future, if we feel that would be appropriate.

The National Confidential Alert Line is run by Public Concern at Work which can pass on concerns to appropriate regulatory bodies, including Audit Scotland. Audit Scotland, the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General are also prescribed persons under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, therefore 'whistleblowers' can raise concerns with us about fraud, corruption or wrongdoing in public bodies. We consider and follow-up any concerns raised as appropriate.

I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Tricia Meldrum  
Senior Manager - Health  
Performance Audit and Best Value Group