Dear Convenor

PUBLIC AUDIT COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO NHS SCOTLAND’S PERFORMANCE

You will remember that during my appearance with Dr Kevin Woods at the Committee there was some discussion of the assertion that NHS Grampian had dealt with 66 cases under the age of 5 attending the A&E Department at Royal Aberdeen Children’s Hospital as a result of being “drunk”. We discussed this assertion and I expressed some surprise at the figure since, in Scotland, children under 15 attending A&E as a result of alcohol intoxication are extremely rare. I suggested that a case sheet review would be necessary in order to establish the accuracy of the comments, since it is possible that children may have been classified as “drunk due to alcohol ingestion” while, in fact, they were being seen at the Casualty Department as a result of having drunk some other noxious agent.

NHS Grampian has now undertaken a case record review and this has shown that only one of the 66 cases was seen as a result of drinking alcohol. The other 65 incidents were not related to alcohol.

I hope this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

DR HARRY BURNS