Out of Hours Primary Care Services in Scotland

1 April 2014 – 6 January 2020

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release

This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides an update on statistics on patients attending Out of Hours (OOH) Primary Care services. Patients attend these services when their registered GP Practices are closed and they need urgent care. Monthly and daily data are presented from 1 April 2014 up to 6 January 2020. Data on attendances during the out of hours period at Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments are also presented.

Main Points

• There were around 49,000 contacts and 53,000 consultations with OOH Primary Care services over the recent two week festive period (22 December to 4 January).

• One in six of the Scottish population (around 850,000 people) contact OOH Primary Care services each year, which results in just under a million consultations.

• In the latest calendar year, home visits accounted for around 1 in 5 (162,000) contacts with OOH Primary Care services. Nearly six out of ten contacts (58%) took place in a Primary Care Emergency Centre.

Monthly Number of contacts/consultations in OOH Primary Care and attendances at A&E Services (Out of Hours period only) NHSScotland, April 2014 – December 2019

1 Please note the chart does not include data for A&E for December 2019. This data will be available in February 2020.
December continues to be OOH Primary care services busiest month with around 80,000 contacts and 87,000 consultations in 2019.

During the summer A&E services have more attendances in the out of hours period, than OOH Primary Care cases, possibly as a result of longer daylight hours and greater risk of injuries. During the winter months and months with public holidays there are more OOH Primary Care cases.

**Background**

From April 2014, data on patient contacts at OOH Primary Care services have been collected across Scotland and maintained by ISD in the national data warehouse. Data are collected on a local IT system (Adastra), then extracted and submitted to the datamart on a weekly basis.

Patient consultations are recorded as an attendance at Primary Care Emergency Centres, Home Visits and/or GP OOH Advice. A patient with an OOH contact can have more than one consultation type (e.g. GP OOH advice followed by home visit).

It should be noted that in the areas where only aggregate A&E data is returned to ISD (typically the minor injury units in NHS Grampian and NHS Highland), there is likely to be an undercount of patients seen. This does not make a significant difference to the overall results. The time period being compared relates to when both services are open i.e. the out of hours time period. This includes evenings, weekends and Easter, Christmas and New Year public holidays.

**Contact**

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**Further Information**

Data tables for this publication are available along with relevant background information, glossary and metadata documents from the data files section of this page. This publication should be viewed as a complimentary analysis to other publications on emergency and urgent care.

**ISD and Official Statistics**

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of ‘Official Statistics’. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. [Further information about our statistics.](#)