Delayed Discharges in NHSScotland
Figures for December 2019

A National Statistics publication for Scotland
Publication date: 4 February 2020

About this release

This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides a monthly update on the number of hospital bed days associated with delayed discharges for a full calendar month. Information is also provided on the number of people experiencing a delay in discharge from hospital at the monthly census point. The data relate to people aged 18 and over who were clinically ready for discharge.

Main Points

- In December 2019, there were 45,404 days spent in hospital by people whose discharge was delayed. This is an increase of 6% compared with the number of delayed days spent in hospital in December 2018 (42,732).

- In December 2019, the average number of beds occupied per day due to delayed discharges was 1,465. In November, the daily average was 1,497.

Delayed Discharge bed use in Scotland; December 2017 – December 2019

- At the December 2019 census point, there were 1,379 people delayed. This is an increase of 12% compared with the number of people delayed (1,236) at the census point in December 2018.

- Of those delayed at the December 2019 census point, 1,199 were delayed more than three days with health and social care reasons accounting for 897 delays (75%), complex needs accounting for 260 delays (22%) and patient and family-related reasons for 42 delays (4%). [Due to rounding the percentages do not add up to 100%].
Background

Timely discharge from hospital is an important indicator of quality and is a marker for person-centred, effective, integrated and harm free care. A delayed discharge occurs when a hospital patient who is clinically ready for discharge from inpatient hospital care continues to occupy a hospital bed beyond the date they are ready for discharge.

The average daily number of beds occupied is calculated by dividing the total monthly number of delayed discharge bed days by the number of days in the calendar month. ISD considers this daily average a better statistic for comparing month on month differences as the number of days in a month varies.

The census figure reflects the position as at the last Thursday of the month.

Revised data definitions and national data requirements came into effect on 1 July 2016. These align census information and associated bed days and ensure more robust and consistent reporting across Scotland. Reports published using data prior to July 2016 cannot be used in direct comparison to figures published in this report.

It should be noted that figures presented in this publication are not directly comparable with other UK countries, due to differences in definitions and data reporting.

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Further Information

The data from this publication, along with background information, glossary, and a metadata document, are available to download from our web page.

For more information on delayed discharges see the delayed discharge section of our website. For related topics, please see the health and social community care pages.

The next release of this publication will be 3 March 2020.

NHS Performs

A selection of information from this publication is included in NHS Performs. NHS Performs is a website that brings together a range of information on how hospitals and NHS Boards within NHSScotland are performing.

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 Statistics. Further information about our statistics.