Delayed Discharges in NHSScotland

Figures for March 2020

A National Statistics statistical release for Scotland

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About this release

This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) 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 March 2020, there were 45,009 days spent in hospital by people whose discharge was delayed. This is an increase of 4% compared with the number of delayed days spent in hospital in March 2019 (43,419).
- In March 2020, the average number of beds occupied per day due to delayed discharges was 1,452. In February 2020, the daily average was 1,616.

![Delayed Discharge bed use in Scotland from March 2018 to March 2020](image)

- At the March 2020 census point, there were 1,171 people delayed. This is a decrease of 14% compared with the number of people delayed (1,364) at the census point in March 2019.
- Of those delayed at the March 2020 census point, 923 were delayed more than three days with health and social care reasons accounting for 585 delays (63%), complex needs accounting for 304 delays (33%) and patient and family-related reasons for 34 delays (4%).
- Delayed discharge figures in NHSScotland have seen a large drop between February and March 2020 which is due to the measures put in place to respond to COVID-19.
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. PHS 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

Data from this publication, along with background information, glossary, and a metadata document, are available to download from our web page and the Scottish Health and Social Care Open Data platform.

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 2 June 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.

PHS and Official Statistics

Public Health Scotland (PHS) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. PHS 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.