Delayed Discharges in NHSScotland

Annual summary of occupied bed days and census figures – data to March 2020
A National Statistics release for Scotland

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About this release

This annual publication by Public Health Scotland (PHS) presents a summary of delayed discharge information across NHSScotland up to March 2020. Detailed information is available for 2019/20, including the number of bed days occupied by people delayed in their discharge from hospital and the average number of delays across monthly census points. The data relate to people aged 18 years and over.

Main Points

- In 2019/20, people delayed in their discharge accounted for 542,204 bed days in NHSScotland. Of these, two thirds (67%) were occupied by people aged 75 years and over.

- There has been a 4% increase in the average daily number of delayed discharge beds occupied between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

- The reasons for delay are:
  - awaiting completion of care arrangements
  - awaiting place availability
  - complex delay reasons
  - awaiting community care assessment
  - other including funding, transport, patient and family related reasons

Note due to rounding the percentages do not add up to 100%

- Delayed discharge figures in March 2020 were affected by measures put in place to respond to COVID-19. A large reduction can be seen in figures for health and social care reasons between February and March 2020.
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.

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. Some annual comparisons are available throughout the publication. However due to these definitional changes comparisons are limited.

Reason for delay figures are based on an average of the number of delays at each monthly census across the year which reflect the position as at the last Thursday of the month. Complex delay reasons include delays due to adults with incapacity legislation.

It should be noted that data 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 are available from the publication page on our website.
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 a planned revision in October 2020. This will include 2019/20 data for the proportion of all hospital beds occupied by delayed discharges and 2018/19 costs information.

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.