Public Health Scotland

Delayed Discharges in NHSScotland

Figures for May 2020

A National Statistics 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 and the number of discharges from hospital that followed a period of delay. 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 years and over who were clinically ready for discharge. Delayed discharge figures in NHSScotland have been affected by measures put in place to respond to COVID-19.

Main Points

• In May 2020, there were 21,225 days spent in hospital by people whose discharge was delayed.

• In May 2020, the average number of beds occupied per day due to delayed discharges was 685. This is similar to April 2020 when the daily average was 676, but substantially below the average for the previous 2 years.

• At the May 2020 census point, there were 711 people delayed. This is an increase of 18% compared to the April 2020 census point when 604 people were delayed.
• Of those delayed at the May 2020 census point, 543 were delayed more than three days with health and social care reasons accounting for 297 delays (55%), complex needs accounting for 213 delays (39%) and patient and family-related reasons for 33 delays (6%).

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 4 August 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.