About this release

This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides a monthly update on the number of operations in NHSScotland that were cancelled the day before, or on the day the patient was due to be treated. Information on the reasons for cancellations is also included.

It should be highlighted that these statistics are affected by the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak. In particular, on the 17 March, NHS Scotland was placed under emergency measures and Boards were asked to suspend all non-urgent elective treatment. Later, on the 23 March, the nation entered a period of ‘lockdown’. This means many operations planned for April were cancelled long before they were due to take place.

Main points

- The total number of planned operations across NHSScotland during May 2020 was 4,120, an increase of 21.0% from 3,406 in April 2020 and a decrease of 86.1% from 29,672 during May 2019.
- In May 2020, 311 operations, or 7.5% of all planned operations, were cancelled the day before or on the day the patient was due to be treated. This compares to 458 (13.4%) in April 2020 and 2,469 (8.3%) in May 2019. At Health Board level this percentage ranged from 0% to 10.7%.
- In May 2020, of all planned operations cancelled in this way:
  - 2.0% were cancelled by the patient;
  - 3.9% were cancelled by the hospital based on clinical reasons;
  - 1.3% were cancelled by the hospital due to capacity or non-clinical reasons;
  - 0.4% were cancelled due to other reasons.
Background

These statistics are released monthly. Data for this publication are submitted from NHS Board theatre systems.

The following definitions are used for the cancellation reason groupings:

- Cancellation based on clinical reason by hospital includes patient unwell, patient not prepared for procedure correctly by hospital and patient did not follow pre op instruction.
- Cancellation based on capacity or non-clinical reason by hospital includes no beds available, staff not available, equipment not available and theatre session overran.
- Cancellation by patient includes patient decides not to go ahead with procedure, patient unable to attend, patient did not attend and patient did not attend pre-op.
- Other includes fire alarm prevents operation from taking place, weather prevented patient / staff travelling and patient transport did not arrive in time to bring patient to hospital.

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Further Information

Data from this publication is available to download from our web page and the NHSScotland Open Data platform along with a metadata document.

For more information on Cancelled Planned Operations see the Cancelled Planned Operations section of our website. For related topics, please see the Waiting Times pages.

The next release of this publication will be 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.