

Scottish Health Service Costs

Scottish Health Service Costs (known as the Costs Book) is the only source of published costs information for NHSScotland (NHSS). The Costs Book provides a detailed analysis of how board operating costs, reported in board annual accounts, have been spent on patient care within NHS Scotland. Scottish Health Service Costs are published by ISD with the support of the Scottish Government Health Department (SGHD) and are also used for comparison across health care providers to ensure efficiency and to benchmark costs.

Information contained in Costs Book is primarily derived from [Scottish Financial Returns \(SFRs\)](#) which are compiled by Scottish Health Boards, and completed as part of their annual accounts cycle. NHS Board annual accounts are audited by an independent body before being agreed by the Scottish Government. While there is no audit of Costs Book, boards are required to show how the quantum of costs included in the Costs Book reconciles to expenditure and income reported in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SOCNE) from the annual accounts. To support this process, the SG are responsible for providing NHS Boards with an [Annual Accounts manual](#). ISD also issue [data templates \(SFR 29.0\)](#) to record this reconciliation. NHS Boards are also provided with comprehensive guidance on standard principles and recommended practices to be applied in the production of their cost information. One of the key principles is that the costing process should be transparent with a clear audit trail.

Costs Book Data Collection System

The Costs Book Data Collection System (CBDCS) is a web-based data collection system issued to NHS Boards to assist them in compiling and submitting the [Scottish Financial Returns](#) (Costs Book dataset) to ISD on an annual basis. A central version of CBDCS is held at ISD which holds data returns from NHS Boards. To support data collection and submission, ISD provides NHS Boards with a comprehensive [Costs Guidance Manual](#). To ensure consistency across all NHS Boards, this manual is updated on a regular basis with input from NHS Boards, the Scottish Government and ISD. In addition, a supplement to the Costing Guidance manual with information specific to the coming year's collection is provided to NHS Board staff.

Quality Assurance

The CBDCS has built in functionality to support data compilation and data quality assurance. The system is updated regularly to include any changes to data templates (SFRs) and validation rules.

In June 2012 an updated version of the CBDCS was introduced across NHS Scotland. The new CBDCS has a comprehensive on-line validation facility to ensure that data is complete and valid prior to submission to ISD. It also includes a year on year comparability function allowing NHS Boards to quality check their data at the point of input and prior to them submitting the data to ISD.

To further enhance the quality of the data submissions, the ISD Data Management team produce draft data quality reports for each NHS Board to review their information. Further manual quality checks of the data are then carried out by the ISD Data Management team. Any queries or anomalies are raised with the finance staff at the relevant NHS Board (s) either via the new web-based CBDCS, which allows a two way dialogue between ISD and the NHS Board in question, or by telephone or email contact. To ensure data robustness, queries may go back and forth between ISD and an NHS Board until a satisfactory resolution is reached.

Once agreement has been reached, the ISD Costs Book analytical team produce a draft version of the [R100 Executive Summary Report](#) for each individual NHS Board. The R100 Executive Summary Report profiles the main elements of the Costs Book data and is sent to the Director of Finance at each NHS Board for sign off. Once data has been signed off by the Directors of Finance the information is used by the ISD analytical team to produce the annual publication of Scottish Health Service Costs.

Despite the efforts of the ISD Data Management team, there can be some data quality factors that are outwith their control. For example:

-- Unavailability of some statistics such as theatre hours – in this case, NHS Boards are instructed to use estimates.

When making comparisons across Scotland, or interpreting the Costs Book data, it should be noted that individual NHS Boards/hospitals (e.g. Island Boards) can face; low volume of patients, fixed costs, economies of scale and rural settings which can result in substantial fluctuations in unit costs and case figures for some hospitals.

To aid user interpretation, any data quality issues are footnoted at the bottom of tables where possible.

On a yearly basis, there can be numerous changes to the Costs Book data templates and to the accounting guidance which can influence year-on-year comparisons. While every attempt is made to make comparisons of the data possible, these changes must be considered together with other factors such as organisational change or missing data. See [Summary of Changes](#) for important changes about the 2016 data.

Reference Information

The collection of costs data is supported by a number of guidance manuals, reference files and systems logic to ensure consistency and quality of the Costs Book. These include:

[Annual Accounts manual](#)

[Costing Guidance manual](#)

[Costs Book Reconciliation to Annual Accounts](#)

[Scottish Financial Returns](#)

Additional costing information and guidance can be found within the [Reference](#) section of the ISD website.