Dental Statistics – NHS Registration and Participation

Statistics as at 30 September 2018
Publication Date – 22 January 2019

About this release

This release by Information Services Division reports on NHS dental registrations in Scotland between September 2000 and September 2018. In addition, it provides data on contact with an NHS dentist between September 2006 and September 2018.

Main Points

Registration

- 5.1 million people were registered with an NHS dentist as at 30 September 2018 (94.2% of the Scottish population). An increase of 1.7 percentage points since last year
- Registration rates were similar for children and adults (94.1% and 94.3% respectively)
- 97.5% of adults living in the most deprived areas were registered with an NHS dentist compared to 88.6% in the least deprived areas
- Registration rates for children living in the most deprived areas were similar to the rates for those living in the least deprived areas.

Contact with an NHS Dentist (Participation)

- As at 30 September 2018, 7 out of 10 registered patients (3.6 million) had seen an NHS dentist within the last two years.
- Children are more likely than adults to have seen an NHS dentist within the last two years (84.1% compared to 66.6%).
- Children and adults from the most deprived areas are less likely to have seen their dentist than those from the least deprived areas. For children, 79.8% of patients living in the most deprived areas compared to 89.2% of patients living in the least deprived areas. For adults, 62.2% compared to 72.7%.
Background

This report only includes data on patients registered with an NHS dentist; data for patients registered with or treated by private dentists is not available.

Registration policy has changed over the years; originally, registration with an NHS dentist lapsed after 15 months, increasing to 36 months in April 2006 then to 48 months in April 2009. In April 2010, ‘lifetime registration’ was introduced. These changes have driven up registration rates and affected rates of participation.

Additionally, registrations held in abeyance have been excluded from the total number of registrations produced in this report. Abeyance is defined as patients registered with a dentist list number that ceased (retired or left) before the date of snapshot. If a patient’s registration goes into abeyance, it is uncertain whether they have access to routine NHS dental care, therefore, we have concluded that their registration should not be included in national registration data. In the past, official dental registration statistics have included all patients, including those whose registrations are in abeyance, and so may have overstated the actual number of people registered with a dentist in Scotland. These statistics have now been updated to exclude registrations held in abeyance and have also reported the numbers of registrations in abeyance separately.

Participation is a measure of patient attendance at an NHS dentist in the two years prior to the time point of interest. This relates only to those patients who are registered with an NHS dentist, not those who only see a dentist for occasional or emergency treatment. Participation as a measure was introduced in September 2010 but has been calculated for data since September 2006 to show the effect of changes to registration rules.

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Further Information

Further information can be found in the Dental Registration and Participation Report.

The Information Services Division published a wide range of dental statistics. You can find all our dental information at the ISD Dental website.

The next release of this report is expected in January 2020 and will present data as at 30 September 2019.