Emergency Department Statistics Background Information and Glossary

Background Information

Data on A&E service attendances across Scotland are collected and maintained by ISD in the national data warehouse known as the A&E datamart. Data is collected on local systems, then extracted and submitted to the datamart soon after the end of each month.

NHS Boards are required to submit data on all attendances for emergency care, whether this is delivered in:

• an A&E Department,
• an Emergency Department,
• a Minor Injuries Unit,
• the trolleyed area of an Assessment Unit (which may be further described as Medical, Surgical, Combined, or Paediatric),

Patients admitted to staffed beds in an Assessment Unit are not included in Emergency Department Statistics; these patients are considered Emergency Admissions and included in the Inpatient and Day Case Statistics.

ISD are currently reviewing the scope of emergency care data collection to ensure that it continues to reflect the way emergency care is carried out. ISD are working with both the Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh and the Royal College of Emergency Medicine.

It is not currently possible to separately identify all patients in Assessment Units within the Emergency Department statistics. Most hospitals with Emergency Departments also have an Assessment Unit. There is variation between sites in how the services are managed and how information on patients is recorded. Some Assessment Units are fully admission units; patients at these units do not appear within the Emergency Department statistics. Most Assessment Units have a mix of trolleyed and bedded areas; only those patients in the trolleyed areas appear in the Emergency Department statistics. Two hospitals with Minor Injuries Units (Vale of Leven and the Western General) have separate Assessment Units where all patients are assessed on trolleys before being admitted or discharged home as appropriate. All patients at these units are counted as A&E attendances within the Emergency Department statistics.

There are two types of data submitted to the A&E datamart: episode and aggregate level data. All hospitals with Emergency Departments submit episode level data containing a detailed record for each patient attendance. Some smaller sites with minor injury units or community hospitals submit only aggregate level data as they do not have the information systems and support to enable collection of detailed patient based information. The proportion of episode level data varies by NHS board: NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, NHS Forth Valley, NHS Tayside, NHS Shetland and NHS Orkney submit episode level data for all their sites, while NHS Highland
submits episode level data for just over 50% of attendances. The aggregate level data consists of the total monthly attendance figures and the number of these seen within 4 hours. 94% of new and unplanned attendances are to sites which supply episode level data. It is expected that the majority of attendances to sites which provide aggregate information will be minor and unlikely to lead to admission.

**Glossary**

**Emergency Department (ED)** A large hospital department which typically provides a consultant-led, 24 hour service with full resuscitation facilities and designated accommodation for the reception of emergency patients.

**Accident & Emergency (A&E) Services** Collectively the term Accident and Emergency (A&E) Services includes the following site types:
1) Emergency Departments (EDs)
2) MIU/Other – small sites such as Minor Injury Units (MIUs), community A&Es or community casualty departments that are GP or nurse led.
3) Trolleyed areas of an Assessment Unit (which may be further described as Medical, Surgical, Combined, or Paediatric),

**A&E datamart** Secure medium for storing data and analysing patient level/aggregate attendances from July 2007 for all Accident and Emergency Services across Scotland. Preferred tool for analysing A&E services data from this date.

**Attendance** The presence of a patient in an A&E service seeking medical attention.

**Waiting time** The time of arrival until the time of admission transfer or discharge.

**The 4 hour wait standard** Since 2007, the national standard for A&E waiting times is that new and unplanned return attendances at an A&E service should be seen and then admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours. This standard applies to all areas of emergency care such as EDs, assessment units, minor injury units, community hospitals, anywhere
where emergency care type activity takes place.

For information on how the Scottish Government (SG) plans to monitor NHS Boards’ performance within A&E Services, please see the [NHS Local Development Plan standards](#).

### 4-hour standard compliance

The proportion of all attendances in a calendar month that are admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours of arrival.

### Admission

Admission to a hospital bed following an attendance at an A&E service.

### Attendance category

A record of whether a patient is making a first or follow-up attendance at a particular A&E service.