Out of Hours Primary Care Services in Scotland
1 April 2014 – 14 January 2018
An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release
This is the latest publication of data from Information Services Division (ISD) on patients attending Out of Hours (OOH) Primary Care services. Patients attend these services when their registered GP Practices are closed. It presents data by financial year from 2014/15 up to 14 January 2018. Attendances at Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments to 31 December 2017 are also included.

Revision to published data as at 13 March 2018. A&E figures for 25 and 26 December 2017 were reported incorrectly due to a production error which has been identified and fixed. The number of A&E attendances on the 25 December has changed from 1,609 to 3,352 and on the 26 December from 1,801 to 4,445. The comparison of A&E attendances with December 2016 has changed from 5% to 10% increase in attendances. The ‘OOH and A&E Monthly’ and ‘OOH and A&E daily’ tables have been updated to reflect this change.

Main Points

- Each year across Scotland, around 850,000 patients use OOH Primary Care services, resulting in just under a million consultations.
- Home visits account for 1 in 5 (183,000) contacts with OOH Primary Care services. Over half of contacts (56%) take place in a Primary Care Emergency Centre.
- During December 2017, there was an increase (12%) of around 10,000 contacts at OOH Primary Care Services compared to December 2016. In addition, A&E Departments also showed a 8,000 (10%) increase in attendances.

Number of contacts in OOH Primary Care and OOH attendances at A&E Services,
Out of Hours period only, Scotland, April 2016 – December 2017

- During the summer A&E services have more attendances than OOH Primary Care services probably as a result of longer days and greater risk of injuries. During the winter months and months with public holidays there are more OOH Primary care contacts.
Over both the four-day holiday periods at Christmas and New Year, there were around 25,000 and 28,000 contacts respectively at OOH Primary Care Services. Over a typical weekend there are around 13,000 contacts.

Background

From April 2014, data on patient contacts at OOH Primary Care Services across Scotland are collected and maintained by ISD in the national data warehouse known as the GP OOH datamart. Data are collected on a local IT system (Adastra), then extracted and submitted to the datamart on a weekly basis.

Patient consultations are recorded as an attendance at Primary Care Emergency Centres, Home Visits &/or GP OOH Advice. A patient with an OOH contact can have more than one consultation type (e.g. GP OOH advice followed by home visit). To align with the A&E data the OOH data contained in the above chart looks only at a single contact with the OOH service rather than all consultations (information on consultations is available in the tables).

In the chart above, it should be noted that in the areas where only aggregate A&E data is returned to ISD (typically NHS Grampian and NHS Highland), there will be an undercount of patients seen. This will not make a significant difference to the overall results. The time period being compared relates to when both services are open i.e. the out of hours time period. This includes evenings, weekends and Easter, Christmas and New Year public holidays.

Please see News and Updates section of our website for more details.

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Further Information

Data tables for this publication are available along with relevant background information, glossary and metadata documents. This publication should be viewed as a complimentary analysis to other publications on emergency and urgent care. You may also be interested to read the publication on the National Review of Primary Care Out of Hours Services.

ISD and Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD 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 Official Statistics. Further information about our statistics.