Out of Hours Primary Care Services in Scotland

1 April 2014 – 30 April 2018

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release

This release from Information Services Division (ISD) provides an update on statistics 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 30 April 2018. Data on attendances at Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments up to 30 April 2018 are also included.

Main Points

- Each year across Scotland, around 870,000 patients use OOH Primary Care services, resulting in just under a million consultations.
- Home visits account for 1 in 5 (187,000) contacts with OOH Primary Care services. Over half of contacts (57%) take place in a Primary Care Emergency Centre.
- Children under 5, women in their twenties and people aged 75 and over were the most common age groups of patients contacting OOH Primary Care services.
- Treatment was completed by OOH Primary Care services for just over half of the patients who were in contact with them. 3% of contacts with services resulted in a referral to A&E or Minor Injuries Unit.

Number of contacts/consultations in OOH Primary Care and attendances at A&E Services (Out of Hours period only) NHSScotland, April 2017 – March 2018
During the summer A&E services have more attendances than OOH Primary Care cases 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 cases.

Over the Easter holiday period in 2018, there were around 23,000 contacts with 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).

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.

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