Out of Hours Primary Care Services in Scotland

1 April 2014 – 23 April 2019

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release

This release by 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 monthly and daily data from 1 April 2014 up to 23 April 2019. Data on attendances during the out of hours period at Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments up to 31 March 2019 are also presented.

Main Points

- One in six of the Scottish population (around 870,000 people) contact OOH Primary Care services each year, which results in just under a million consultations.
- In the year ending 31 March 2019, home visits accounted for around 1 in 5 (167,000) contacts with OOH Primary Care services. Nearly six out of ten (58%) contacts took place in a Primary Care Emergency Centre.
- In the year ending 31 March 2019, 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.
- Over the same time period, OOH Primary Care services completed the treatment for just over half of the patients (53%) who were in contact with them. The remaining 47% were referred to other services such as Accident & Emergency, or their own GP.

Number of contacts/consultations in OOH Primary Care and attendances at A&E Services (Out of Hours period only) NHSScotland, April 2016 – March 2019
• There were around 21,000 contacts with OOH Primary Care services over the Easter period in April (19 to 22 April). This was a decrease of 7% compared to the Easter period in 2018.

• December continues to be OOH Primary care services busiest month with 86,000 contacts in 2018.

• During the summer A&E services have more attendances in the out of hours period, than OOH Primary Care cases possibly as a result of longer daylight hours and greater risk of injuries. During the winter months and months with public holidays there are more OOH Primary Care cases.

Background
From April 2014, data on patient contacts at OOH Primary Care services have been collected across Scotland and maintained by ISD in the national data warehouse. 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 and/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 is likely to be an undercount of patients seen. This does 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.

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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.