Out of Hours Primary Care Services in Scotland
1 April 2014 – 31 July 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 and they need urgent care. Monthly and daily data are presented from 1 April 2014 up to 31 July 2019. Data on attendances during the out of hours period at Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments are also presented.

Revision to published data as at 17 December 2019. A&E figures for 25/26 December 2018, 1/2 January 2019 and 19 and 22nd April 2019 were reported incorrectly due to a production error which has been identified and fixed. The chart in the publication summary has been updated to reflect these changes for December 2018, January 2019 and April 2019. A&E attendances for December 2018 has changed from 76,490 to 80,376, January 2019 from 71,290 to 76,173 and April 2019 from 74,632 to 80,478. The ‘OOH and A&E Monthly’ and ‘OOH and A&E daily’ tables have been updated to reflect this change.

Main Points
• One in six of the Scottish population (around 850,000 people) contact OOH Primary Care services each year, which results in just under a million consultations.
• In the latest financial year, 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.

Number of contacts/consultations in OOH Primary Care and attendances at A&E Services (Out of Hours period only) NHSScotland, April 2014 - July 2019
• There were around 63,000 contacts with OOH Primary Care services over the month of July in 2019. This is similar to the number of contacts in July 2018.

• December continues to be OOH Primary care services busiest month with around 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.

Contact
Kathy McGregor
Principal Information Analyst
0131 275 6551
k.mcgregor2@nhs.net

Fiona MacKenzie
Service Manager
0131 275 6515
f.mackenzie@nhs.net

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.