

Publication Report



General Practice – GP workforce and practice population statistics to 2012

Publication date – 18 December 2012



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Introduction

The information released in this publication falls into two main parts. The first part presents data on GPs contracted to work in Scottish practices in the years 2004 to 2012 at Scotland, NHS Board and Community Health Partnership (CHP/CHCP) level. GP Information is presented on:

- Designation (e.g. Salaried GP or Specialist Trainee)
- Gender profile
- Age profile

The second part of the release gives information on the practices and the patients registered with them, including:

- The broad age distribution of patients at NHS Board and CHP level
- The deprivation and urban/rural mix of practice populations

Key points

- The number of GPs contracted to work in Scottish general practices decreased over the last year, from 4,893 in 2011 to 4,859 in 2012, a drop of 0.7%.
- Between 2004 and 2012 the number of GPs contracted to work in Scottish general practices has increased from 4,456 to 4,859, a rise of 9.0%.
- The average size of a Scottish GP practice in terms of numbers of registered patients was 5,586 at 1st October 2012.

Results and Commentary

General Practice Workforce

The table below presents the number of GPs contracted to work in General Practice in Scotland for each year from 2004 to 2012. Data are shown for all GPs and by designation. It should be noted that a GP could hold more than one contract and this can be at different designations. Because of this the sum of the designations will not equal the 'All GPs' total.

Table 1: Number (Headcount) of GPs in post by designation; 2004 – 2012

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
All GPs	4,456	4,521	4,597	4,687	4,892	4,909	4,909	4,893	4,859
Performer	3,782	3,763	3,770	3,785	3,783	3,805	3,778	3,750	3,745
Performer Salaried	188	288	354	418	460	487	483	526	539
Performer Retainee	208	176	169	165	165	160	157	145	138
GP Specialist Trainee	282	300	308	325	491	465	497	478	447

Source: GPCD

There has been a slight decrease in the number of GPs contracted to work in Scottish general practices over the last year, from 4,893 in 2011 to 4,859 in 2012. This is a decrease of 34 (0.7%). The largest drop has been in Specialist Trainees which has seen a decrease of 31, from 478 in 2011 to 447 in 2012 (6.5%).

Although the number of GPs contracted to work in Scottish General practices fell last year, between 2004 and 2012 the number of GPs has increased from 4,456 to 4,859, a rise of 9.0%. The majority of this rise has been due to increases in the number of performer salaried and specialist trainee GPs.

The number of performer salaried GPs has increased from 188 in 2004 to 539 in 2012 (an increase of 187%).

There was a marked increase in the headcount of specialist trainees (also referred to as GP registrars) between 2004 and 2012, from 282 in 2004 to 447 in 2010 (an increase of 58.5%). This is related to an increase in the number of training places available and changes in the training arrangements from 2008. From 2008 GP trainees work in practices during two stages of their training whereas, historically, registrars would work in practice primarily at the end stages of their training.

An increasing proportion of contracted GPs are female and from 2009 onwards females outnumber males. In 2012 females make up 52.9% of contracted GPs and males 47.1%. More details are available in the table [Number of GPs in post by gender and age group](#).

The GP figures reported here do not include GPs who work only as locums (also known as sessional GPs) or the majority of GPs who work only in Out of Hours services. The actual number of GPs working in Scotland is therefore higher than reported here.

Whether GPs work full-time or part-time is not available from these data and is no longer routinely collected. However an estimation of the whole time equivalent (WTE) number of GPs for 2009 can be found in the 2009 National Primary Care Workforce Survey results at: <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/General-Practice/GPs-and-Other-Practice-Workforce/national-primary-care-workforce-survey-2009.asp>.

Longer term trend information on GP workforce is published on ISD's main workforce pages at www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Workforce/.

Practice counts and practice population statistics

Table 2: Number of GP practices with a registered patient list; total registered list size, and average list size; 2006 – 2012

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of Practices	1,021	1,018	1,015	1,014	1,009	1,002	991
Total List Size	5,406,036	5,423,985	5,470,338	5,493,023	5,515,003	5,529,522	5,536,164
Average List Size	5,295	5,328	5,389	5,417	5,466	5,518	5,586

Note: These data exclude figures from practices who do not have any registered patients as well as from a small number of specialist GP practices.

Source: CHI

The average size of a Scottish GP practice in terms of numbers of registered patients was 5,586 at 1st October 2012. This compares to an average size of 5,295 at 1st October 2006, an increase of 5.5%. This difference is due to an increase in the population of patients registered to GP practices in Scotland as well as a drop, from 1,021 to 991, in the number of GP practices. The drop in the number of GP practices is due mainly to two or more practices merging into one. Although the drop in the number of practices over the 7 years looked at in the table above is 30, only 6 practices have closed without being part of a merger in this time.

Other uses of these data

Many of the practice count and population statistics presented in this publication, such as reference files on deprivation status and urban/rural locations of practice populations, are useful as a resource for the NHS, the Scottish and other governments, general practices, researchers and others.

Glossary

CHI	The Community Health Index (CHI) is a population register, which is used in Scotland for health care purposes.
CHP/CHCP	Community Health Partnership/Community Health and Care Partnership
GP	General Medical Practitioner
GP Registrar	A medical practitioner who is being trained in general practice. Now also known as a GP Specialist Trainee.
GP Retainee	A GP who can be utilised by a practice as they are required. This primarily aims to allow female GPs returning to work after maternity leave to keep in touch with medicine, but it does not exclude men. Also known as a performer retainee.
GPCD	GP Contractor Database. A centralised database of GP and general practice details, held at ISD but with data maintained by NHS Boards. Its principal purpose is to hold Performer List information for all NHS Board areas in Scotland.
Performer	GP performers that are not salaried, retainees or registrars - generally the practice partners.
Performer Retainee	A GP who can be utilised by a practice as they are required. This primarily aims to allow female GPs returning to work after maternity leave to keep in touch with medicine, but it does not exclude men. Also known as a GP retainee.
Performer Salaried	A GP who is employed by the practice or by the NHS Board on a salaried basis. Also known as a salaried GP.
Salaried GP	A GP who is employed by the practice or by the NHS Board on a salaried basis. Also known as a performer salaried GP.
Specialist Trainee	A medical practitioner who is being trained in general practice. Previously known as a GP registrar.
WTE	Whole Time Equivalent. This is an estimated measurement of the staff resource available, taking into account part time working.

List of Tables

Name	Time period	File & size
Number of GPs in post by designation in Scotland	2004-2012	Excel [43kb]
Number of GPs in post by designation by NHS Board	2004-2012	Excel [103kb]
Number of GPs in post by designation by CHP/CHCP	2006-2012	Excel [2,200kb]
Number of GPs in post by gender and age group	2004-2012	Excel [81kb]
Number of GPs in post by NHS Board and gender	2004-2012	Excel [106kb]
Number of GPs in post by CHP/CHCP and gender*	2012*	Excel [78kb]
Number of practices by NHS Board and numbers of patients registered with practices by age group and practice type*	2012*	Excel [55kb]
Number of practices by CHP/CHCP and numbers of patients registered with practices by age group and practice type*	2012*	Excel [2,160kb]
Practice populations by deprivation status*	2012*	Excel [152kb]
Practice populations by urban/rural classification*	2012*	Excel [190kb]
Practice population trends by gender and age group	1999-2012	Excel [2,334kb]

Where file names and time periods are marked with an asterisk (), this indicates that equivalent tables for earlier years are also available on the General Practice area of ISD's website. To access these earlier data tables and other information related to general practices and their workforce, click on the relevant sub-topic area below:

[GPs & Other Practice Workforce](#)
[Practices and their Populations](#)

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Further Information

Further information can be found on the [ISD website](#)

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Appendix

A1 – Publication Metadata (including revisions details)

Metadata Indicator	Description
Publication title	General Practice – GP workforce and practice population statistics to 2012
Description	Headcounts of GPs contracted to work in Scottish general practices in the years 2004 to 2012 and information on practices and their registered patients
Theme	Health and Social Care
Topic	General Practice
Format	Excel workbooks
Data source(s)	General Practitioner Contractor Database (GPCD); General Medical Services (GMS) Data Warehouse; Community Health Index (CHI) database
Date that data are acquired	27 November 2012
Release date	18 December 2012
Frequency	Annual
Timeframe of data and timeliness	Data up to 01 October 2012. This is the normal timeliness for this publication and no delay has occurred. Reports data since 2004.
Continuity of data	Reports on data from 2004
Revisions statement	These data are not subject to planned major revisions. There may be minor revisions to already published statistics in future editions of this publication in the event that any underlying errors in the data sources are found and corrected.
Revisions relevant to this publication	Revisions have been made to previously published data on GP numbers for years 2005 to 2011. This is due to improvements in source data.
Concepts and definitions	See Glossary and footnotes of Excel workbooks for further information
Relevance and key uses of the statistics	Making information publicly available for planning, provision of services and research.
Accuracy	<p>Information on the GP workforce and the practices within which they work is collated and recorded routinely by NHS Boards in line with regulatory and operational requirements. This information is therefore considered to have a high degree of overall accuracy.</p> <p>Maintenance of health service records on patients registered to practices is a core administrative function of the NHS and therefore the information on numbers of patients registered to each practice is expected to have a high degree of accuracy.</p>
Completeness	The data are considered complete. Workforce statistics taken from the General Practitioner Contractor Database (GPCD)
Comparability	Scottish GP workforce information is broadly comparable with GP

	<p>workforce information for the other UK countries. However there are some variations in how the individual GP designations/contract types are described, and care must be taken to ensure that like for like groups are being compared (eg whether GP trainees or retainees are or are not included in each group being compared). The headcount information also takes no account of whether differing proportions of GPs in each country work on a full time or part time basis.</p> <p>Information on the numbers of general practices and the numbers of patients registered to them is fairly closely comparable with that for other UK countries.</p> <p>Information on the numbers of practice patients by deprivation group or urban/rural group is not directly comparable to information for other countries, as the classifications used to describe the deprivation or urban/rural status of populations are specific to Scotland.</p>
Accessibility	It is the policy of ISD Scotland to make its web sites and products accessible according to published guidelines .
Coherence and clarity	Tables and charts are accessible via the ISD website at: http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/General-Practice/
Value type and unit of measurement	Numbers and percentages
Disclosure	The ISD protocol on Statistical Disclosure Protocol is followed.
Official Statistics designation	National Statistics
UK Statistics Authority Assessment	Assessment has taken place and the subsequent report was published in June 2012 at http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-209---statistics-on-dental-and-ophthalmic-services-and-general-practice-in-scotland.pdf
Last published	20 December 2011
Next published	17 December 2013
Date of first publication	Paper publications since 1970s; Web publications since 1996.
Help email	nss.isdGeneralPractice@nhs.net
Date form completed	27 November 2012

A2 – Early Access details (including Pre-Release Access)

Pre-Release Access

Under terms of the "Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008", ISD are obliged to publish information on those receiving Pre-Release Access ("Pre-Release Access" refers to statistics in their final form prior to publication). The standard maximum Pre-Release Access is five working days. Shown below are details of those receiving standard Pre-Release Access and, separately, those receiving extended Pre-Release Access.

Standard Pre-Release Access:

Scottish Government Health Department
NHS Board Chief Executives
NHS Board Communication leads

Extended Pre-Release Access

Extended Pre-Release Access of 8 working days is given to a small number of named individuals in the Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division). This Pre-Release Access is for the sole purpose of enabling that department to gain an understanding of the statistics prior to briefing others in Scottish Government (during the period of standard Pre-Release Access).

Scottish Government Health Department (Analytical Services Division)

A3 – ISD and Official Statistics

About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

Information Services Division (ISD) is a business operating unit of NHS National Services Scotland and has been in existence for over 40 years. We are an essential support service to NHSScotland and the Scottish Government and others, responsive to the needs of NHSScotland as the delivery of health and social care evolves.

Purpose: To deliver effective national and specialist intelligence services to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland.

Mission: Better Information, Better Decisions, Better Health

Vision: To be a valued partner in improving health and wellbeing in Scotland by providing a world class intelligence service.

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. The Code of Practice is produced and monitored by the UK Statistics Authority which is independent of Government. Under the Code of Practice, the format, content and timing of statistics publications are the responsibility of professional staff working within ISD.

ISD's statistical publications are currently classified as one of the following:

- National Statistics (ie assessed by the UK Statistics Authority as complying with the Code of Practice)
- National Statistics (ie legacy, still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- Official Statistics (ie still to be assessed by the UK Statistics Authority)
- other (not Official Statistics)

Further information on ISD's statistics, including compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and on the UK Statistics Authority, is available on the [ISD website](#).

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.