Delayed Discharges in NHSScotland

Annual summary of occupied bed days and census figures

Figures up to March 2018
A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release

This annual publication by Information Services Division presents a summary of delayed discharge information across NHSScotland up to March 2018. Detailed information is available for 2017/18, including the number of bed days occupied by people delayed in their discharge from hospital and the average number of delays across monthly census points, which is collated from previously published monthly figures. In addition, information is presented on the proportion of all hospital beds occupied by delayed discharges, the bed day rate and the latest available estimated cost information (2016/17). The data relate to people aged 18 and over.

Main Points

- In 2017/18 there were 494,123 bed days occupied by people delayed in their discharge in NHSScotland. Of these 69% were occupied by people aged 75+.

- Adjusting for the definitional changes effective from July 2016, there was a 6% reduction in delayed discharge bed days between 2016/17 and 2017/18.

- Approximately 1 in 13 (7.8%) occupied beds in NHSScotland were due to delayed discharges.

- The reasons for delay are:
  - awaiting completion of care arrangements
  - awaiting place availability
  - complex delay reasons
  - awaiting community care assessment
  - other including funding, transport, patient and family related reasons

- In 2016/17 the estimated cost of delayed discharges in NHSScotland was £125 million, with an estimated average daily bed day cost of £234.
Background

Timely discharge from hospital is an important indicator of quality and is a marker for person-centred, effective, integrated and harm-free care. A delayed discharge occurs when a hospital patient who is clinically ready for discharge from inpatient hospital care continues to occupy a hospital bed beyond the date they are ready for discharge.

Revised data definitions and national data requirements came into effect on 1 July 2016. These align census information and associated bed days and ensure more robust and consistent reporting across Scotland. Some annual comparisons are available throughout the publication. However, due to these definitional changes, comparisons are limited.

Reason for delay figures are based on an average of the number of delays at each monthly census across the year which reflect the position as at the last Thursday of the month. Complex delay reasons include delays due to adults with incapacity legislation.

The latest available cost information is 2016/17.

It should be noted that figures presented in this publication are not directly comparable with other UK countries, due to differences in definitions and data reporting.

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Further Information

Data from this publication are available to view on excel data tables along with the full publication report.

For more information on delayed discharges see the delayed discharge section of our website. For related topics, please see the health and social community care pages.

The next release of this publication will be 10 September 2019.

NHS Performs

A selection of information from this publication is included in NHS Performs. NHS Performs is a website that brings together a range of information on how hospitals and NHS Boards within NHSScotland are performing.

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.