Delayed Discharges in NHSScotland

Figures for March 2019

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release

This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides a monthly update on the number of hospital bed days associated with delayed discharges for a full calendar month. Information is also provided on the number of people experiencing a delay in discharge from hospital at the monthly census point. The data relate to people aged 18 and over.

Main Points

- In March 2019, 43,419 days were spent in hospital by people whose discharge was delayed. This is an increase of 2% compared with 42,628 days in March 2018.
- In March 2019, the average number of beds occupied per day due to delayed discharges was 1,401. In February, the daily average was 1,458.
- At the March 2019 census point, there were 1,364 people delayed. This is similar to the number of people delayed (1,370) at the census point in March 2018.
- Of those delayed at the March 2019 census point, 1,083 were delayed more than three days with health and social care reasons accounting for 782 delays (72%), complex needs accounting for 265 delays (24%) and patient and family-related reasons for 36 delays (3%). [Due to rounding the percentages do not add up to 100%].
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.

The average daily number of beds occupied is calculated by dividing the total monthly number of delayed discharge bed days by the number of days in the calendar month. ISD considers this daily average a better statistic for comparing month on month differences as the number of days in a month varies.

The census figure reflects the position as at the last Thursday of the month.

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. Reports published using data prior to July 2016 cannot be used in direct comparison to figures published in this report.

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.

Contact

Lisa Reedie
Principal Information Analyst
0131 275 6117
nss.delayeddischarges@nhs.net

Deanna Campbell
Senior Information Analyst
0141 282 2338

Further Information

The data from this publication are available to download from our web page along with a background information and glossary, and metadata document.

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 4 June 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.