About this release

This release by the Information Services Division provides information on the percentage of time spent at home or in a community setting in the last six months of life. This is one of the measures used to support and determine progress towards the Scottish Government’s “Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care”. Data are presented by financial year from 2010/11 to 2018/19, by NHS Board, Health and Social Care Partnership of residence and for Scotland.

Note that hospital data and National Records of Scotland deaths data are provisional for 2018/19. This publication will be updated in October 2019 with final figures. Figures for the latest year should therefore be treated with caution as there could be an undercount of hospital admissions, particularly for people who died in the last three months of the year. This is not expected to have a large impact on these published figures when they are revised in subsequent updates.

Main Points

- In 2018/19, there were 53,168 deaths in Scotland excluding those where an external cause such as unintentional injury was recorded. For these individuals, 89.2% of their last six months of life was spent either at home or in a community setting, with the remaining 10.8% spent in hospital. This is equivalent to an average of 20 days in hospital in the six months prior to death.

- Over the past nine years, the percentage of time spent at home or in a community setting has gradually increased from 85.3% in 2010/11 to 89.2% in 2018/19.

Percentage of last six months of life spent at home or in a community setting; 2010/11 - 2018/19

1. Figures for 2018/19 are incomplete and will be revised in October 2019 publication.
In 2018/19, females aged 85 and older spent a higher percentage of their last six months of life in the community (90.0%) compared to males (87.8%); this equates to females spending, on average an extra four days in the community in their last six months of life.

Background
This Quality Outcome Measure focuses on measuring the impact of the Scottish Government’s “Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care” which has one of its commitments to “support improvements in the collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data and evidence relating to needs, provision, activity, indicators and outcomes in respect of palliative and end of life care”. This strategic framework superseded “Living and Dying Well: A National Action Plan for Palliative and End of Life in Scotland”.

The percentage of time spent at home or in a community setting towards the end of life provides a high level indication of progress in implementation of the national action plan. This is inferred by measuring the amount of time spent in a hospital setting during the last months of life (using hospital admissions data) and from this estimating the time spent at home or in a community setting.

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Further Information
Find out more in the full report. The data from this publication is available to download from our web page. For more information on Palliative and End of Life Care see the End of Life Care section of our website.

The next update of this publication will be released in October 2019.

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.