NHSScotland Workforce
Quarter ending 31 March 2018
A National Statistics publication for Scotland
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About this release
This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides a quarterly update on the number of staff employed by NHSScotland and vacancy information for nursing and midwifery, allied health professions and consultants as at 31 March 2018. When describing the size of a particular staff group figures are presented either as headcount (actual numbers of staff) or whole time equivalent (WTE) which adjusts the headcount to take account of part time working.

Main Points
At 31 March 2018:

- The 163,061 staff employed by NHSScotland represents an increase of 0.3% over the last year. The WTE, which adjusts for part time working, has risen by the same rate to 139,918.4. Whilst there has been six consecutive years of annual growth, the rate of growth has slowed.

- 7.5% (422.5 WTE) of medical and dental consultant posts were vacant. Whilst the vacancy rate is the same as that a year ago, the number of posts vacant for six months or more has seen a 23.7% (48.6 WTE) increase to 253.9 WTE.
NHSScotland spent a total of £175.7 million on nursing and midwifery bank and agency staff during the latest financial year. This represents an increase of £9.2 million (5.5%) in comparison to 2016/17. The majority of this spend was on bank staff (£152.1 million, an increase of 7.1% on the previous year) with the remaining spend on agency staff (£23.6 million, down 3.6% on the previous year).

Sickness absence rate for NHSScotland in 2017/18 was 5.39%, up from 5.20% in the previous year and marking the fourth consecutive annual increase. The current national target of 4% has fluctuated between a high of 5.55% in 2006/07 to a low of 4.63% in 2011/12 and therefore the standard has yet to be achieved at the national level.

Background

The NHSScotland workforce has a significant role to play in the delivery of quality services that meet the needs of patients, their families and the general public in a modern health service. Information on staff directly employed is sourced from each NHS Board’s human resources and payroll systems. These are dynamic, operational systems and data can change over time. ISD works with NHS Boards to improve data quality and previously published information may change from one publication to the next to reflect these improvements.

Following a consultation on proposed changes to modernise the presentation, improve the usability and enhance the accessibility of NHSScotland workforce statistics, this release marks a gradual shift in how NHS Scotland workforce statistics are presented. In conjunction with the new annual report, data can be explored at a local, regional and national level via a suite of dynamic dashboards, open data files and a reducing number of excel files.

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Further Information

Find out more in the full report. The data from this publication are available to download from our data tables web page and dashboards web page along with a background information and glossary document. Aggregated data underlying the dashboards for 31 March 2018 is available on the NHSScotland Open Data platform as five CSV files to meet the 3* criteria for ‘open data’.

For more information on workforce statistics see the workforce section of our website.

The next release of this publication will be 4 September 2018.

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.